The WONDERS OF THE GREAT UNVEILING

By L. SALE-HARRISON, B.D., D.D.

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The Wonders *of the* Great Unveiling

IN this excellent compendium of interest and instruction we have the result of many years of diligent study of a book that is a most important part of the Word of God, and one which promises great blessings to the reader of it. Many able students of the prophetic Scriptures pronounce this work of Dr. Sale-Harrison's as the only one of its kind in its collating of symbols, and its use of other Scriptural passages to explain such. A worthy example of the Divine method of true Biblical exegesis, it supplies a needed want in private study, and merits a prominent place amongst Bible helps for handy reference.

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THE WONDERS OF THE GREAT UNVEILING

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The Wonders of the Great Unveiling

The Remarkable Book of the Revelation

BY

L. SALE-HARRISON, B.D., D.D., F.R.G.S.

Author of

"Palestine: God's Monument of Prophecy"; "The Remarkable Jew: God's Great Timepiece"; "The Resurrection of the Old Roman Empire"; "The Coming Great Northern Confederacy: or, The Future of Russia and Germany"; "The Judgment Seat of Christ"; "The Anglo-Saxon Nation: The Anglo-Saxon Future"; "Israel's Regathering: The Return of the Jew," etc. etc.

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DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS

Whose love for the Word of God has been a constant inspiration, and whose lives have ever been a tribute to their faith.

PREFACE

IN this day of world-wide happenings the study of "The Revelation" has become increasingly important, and there seems to be a need for a book, small, yet complete enough, and specially suitable for Bible Class work. The writer has endeavoured to supply such a need.

Not only has he given an exegesis of each chapter, but almost every important symbol and expression has been explained.

Where symbols have not been sufficiently dealt with in the exegesis of the verse, they have been placed with explanations at the end of their respective chapters, but where symbols are not given in such list, they will be found in the body of the exegesis. If any symbols are given in both places it is for the purpose of amplification. If a certain symbol does not appear on the list under its own chapter, it will usually be found in the complete list under another chapter. To repeat a symbol on the list every time it is found in a chapter, would necessitate the making of such a lengthy list that quick reference would be impossible, and the book would have to be greatly enlarged.

It has already been noted that we have more explained than unexplained symbols in the book, and that there are no unexplained symbols which are not found somewhere else in Scripture. So in explaining the symbols these Scriptural references have been given.

All symbols used in the special lists are numbered and indexed in the page following the preface. This

saves repetition and provides handy reference. The heading of each page with the number of its respective chapter will also be found convenient.

Because many numbers are used symbolically in "The Revelation," a few pages on "The Significance of Numbers" are added before Chapter I.

For a number of years the writer has been urged to write this treatise, especially since he has given the whole of his time to Bible conferences.

It is issued with the prayer that the Lord may abundantly bless the contents of its pages, that many may be led more earnestly to study the "Word of God," and be delivered from error to truth, and that others who have not experienced the joy of salvation may accept Him who said:

"Surely I come quickly."

L. SALE-HARRISON.

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

THE continued steady demand for this book in its three editions has been so wonderful that another and still larger edition has been decided upon.

It has been considered wise to make the fourth edition even more helpful, by amplifying many explanations without unduly enlarging the work, or increasing the price.

Throughout the British Empire, and the U.S.A., it is increasingly used as the text book of Bible Classes and Bible Study Circles. We only allow this privilege when acknowledgement is made by leaders using it. We believe that every member of his class, or audience, should have the privilege of securing a copy for their own private study.

It cannot be copied by print, or type.

The joy that it has brought to the hearts of multitudes—ministers and laymen—has made necessary a careful revision of its pages.

This edition goes out with a prayer that in these days of perplexity many may find much help and blessing in the meditation of this, the consummating book of the Bible.

L. SALE-HARRISON.

LIST OF SPECIALLY NUMBERED SYMBOLS

SYMBOLS not explained in their respective verses, but separately treated at the *end* of each chapter.

CHAPTER I

1. Seven Spirits (v. 4).
2. The Faithful Witness (v. 5).
3. The First Begotten of the Dead (v. 5).
4. The Prince of the Kings of the Earth (v. 5).
5. Clouds (v. 7).
6. Alpha and Omega (v. 8).
7. Candlesticks (v. 12).
8. Son of Man (v. 13).
9. Clothing and the Girdle (v. 13).
10. White like Wool (v. 14).
11. Eyes as a Flame of Fire (v. 14).
12. His Feet like unto Fine Brass (v. 15).
13. His Voice like the Sound of Many Waters (v. 15).
14. In His Right Hand Seven Stars (v. 16).
15. Out of His Mouth went a Sharp Two-Edged Sword (v. 16).
16. His Countenance as the Sun, etc. (v. 16).
17. The First and the Last (v. 17).
18. Keys of Hades and of Death (v. 18).
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20. Angels (v. 20).

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22. Candlestick (v. 5).
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24. In the Paradise of God (Lit. Rend.) (v. 7).
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27. Synagogue of Satan (v. 9).
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34. Satan's Seat (Throne) (v. 13).
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36. Balaam and Balac (v. 14).
37. Nicolaitanes (v. 15).
38. The Sword of My Mouth (v. 16).
39. I will Give of the Hidden Manna (v. 17).
40. A White Stone, etc. (v. 17).
41. Son of God (v. 18).
42. His Eyes as a Flame of Fire (v. 18).
43. His Feet like Fine Brass (v. 18).
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60. Pillar in the Temple of My God (v. 12).
61. Go no more Out (v. 12).
62. New Jerusalem, etc. (v. 12).
63. Amen (v. 14).
64. Faithful and True Witness (v. 14).
65. The Beginning of the Creation of God (v. 14).
66. Buy (v. 18).
67. Sold (v. 18).
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231. Winepress (v. 15).
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234. The False Prophet (v. 20).
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251. A Great and High Mountain (v. 10).
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256. City was Pure Gold (v. 18).
257. Foundations of Precious Stones (vv. 18-20).
258. The Lamb's Book of Life (v. 27).

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264. That do His Commandments (v. 14).
265. Root and Offspring of David (v. 16).
266. Bright and Morning Star (v. 16).
267. Spirit (v. 17).
268. Bride (v. 17).
269. Book of this Prophecy (v. 19).
270. Book of Life (v. 19).
271. I Come Quickly (v. 16).
272. The Benediction (v. 21).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS

The significance of numbers in Scripture is a very interesting study, but we can only briefly refer to it.

ONE

One Symbolizes Unity

"I and My Father are **one**," said Christ (John 10. 30). He also prayed "That they all may be **one**; as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be **one** in Us, . . . and the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are **one**" (John 17. 21, 22).

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be **one** flock, and **one** shepherd" (John 10. 16). These words of our Lord conveyed a remarkable truth, and because the Jews were not prepared to accept this invitation to come into vital **union** with Christ, there was a **division** among them (John 10. 19).

In Psalm 22. 20 the Lord Jesus is called "My Darling" (literal meaning **"My Only One"**); and Zechariah 12. 10 states that the Jews "will mourn as one mourneth for his **only one.**" These Scriptures reveal two truths. First, that God had only **One Son** whom He was giving for the life of the world. Second, there can only be true unity in Jewish national life, and union with God when they recognise their Messiah as the **One** whom they have rejected.

Hebrews 4. 12 states that "The Word of God is a discerner (critic) of the thoughts and intents of the heart." When we rest upon the **unity** of the Book it becomes the **one** and **only** critic. When we question its authority as THE Word of God we become its critics. Union with the world takes the place of union with God.

TWO

Two is the Number of Division

1. The thought of **redemption** is also expressed.

In Exodus 8. 23 we read, "I will put a 'division' between My people and thy people." The word "division" is translated "re-

demption" in the Bible margin, because "division" expresses separation, and the Lord separated the Children of Israel from the Egyptians by blood—the price of redemption.

Two angels went to separate Lot from Sodom in Genesis 19. Note how many times the word **two** occurs in the beginning of this chapter.

The world is made up of **contrasts.** We think of many things by way of **contrasts**—heaven and hell, God and man, saved and lost, salvation and damnation, etc.

2. **Two** also expresses witness-bearing.

"Out of the mouth of **two** witnesses every word shall be established."

Two angels witnessed to the Resurrection and to the Ascension of our Lord.

There were **two** witnesses before the flood—Enoch and Noah.

Two in the Wilderness—Moses and Aaron.

Two who bore true witness among the spies—Caleb and Joshua.

Many others are referred to in the Scriptures. We must keep in mind that **two** suggests **division** and **witnessing.**

It will illustrate this to state that to bear true witness, we must be separated from the world (worldliness).

There are **two** natures within. If sin is not to have dominion over us, we must realise the truth of separation.

It was the **Second** Person of the Trinity who was separated from God when He was hanging on the Cross as Sin-bearer (He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"), and through whom we are separated from the world unto God.

THREE

Three is the Number of Divine Completeness and Perfection

It is the number of the Trinity and is the first of the four perfect numbers (the other three being **seven, ten, and twelve**).

The relation of Jehovah to eternity is given in the **threefold expression** "Who is" (present), "Who was" (past), "Who is to come" (future).

In reference to our Lord many things could be said.

1. **Three** times a voice from heaven spake to Him.

2. His great temptation in the Wilderness came in a **threefold** way (Luke 4. 3, 5-7, 9-10), being repeated in the three later temptations of His life.

3. He is **The Way, The Truth, The Life.**
4. He raised **three** from the dead.
5. He was crucified at the **third** hour.
6. There were **three** hours of darkness when He was on the Cross.
7. He arose the **third** day.

The false trinity. The Beast. The false prophet (Antichrist). The Dragon (Rev. 13).

FOUR

Four is the Number of Creation, the World-Number

This number marks God's creative works. It is the signature of the world.

The **fourth** day the material creation was finished (Gen. 1. 14-19).

There are **four** divisions of the human race.

Nations, Kindreds, Peoples, Tongues are mentioned several times in Revelation, but the first occurrence is in Chapter 7. 9.

The earth has

1. **Four** regions, North, South, East, West.
2. **Four** elements: earth, air, fire, water.
3. **Four** seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter.
4. **Four** kingdoms: mineral, vegetable, animal, spiritual.
5. **Four** winds.
6. **Four** divisions of our day: morning, noon, evening and night.

Daniel gives **four** universal Empires (Dan. 2. 7).

We have also **four** Gospels presenting our Lord to men.

Therefore **four** expresses universality, etc.

FIVE

Five is the Number of Grace

It is a significant number in connection with the measurements of the Tabernacle, which was certainly a place where God's grace was manifested.

Five ministries through which God's grace is to be revealed are given in Ephesians 4. 11, namely: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers.

David chose **five** smooth stones when he went against Goliath—He trusted in God's grace.

We have two sets of Commandments of **five** each. **Five** in relation to God, and **five** in relation to man.

Five divisions comprise the books of the Bible.

1. The Old Testament—The Preparation for the Coming of the Christ of God. The Pentateuch comprises **five** books. The Psalms contain **five** books, each closing with the doxology. The number five is strikingly evident in many other ways.
2. The Gospels—The Revelation of our Lord.
3. The Acts—The Evangel proclaimed.
4. The Letters—The Doctrine of Christ taught.
5. The Apocalypse—The Consummation of all that is written from Genesis to the end of the Book.

SIX

Six is the Number of Man

On the **sixth** day man was created.

He was to work **six** days.

Goliath—the opposer of God's people—was **six** cubits and a span in height, and he had **six** pieces of armour.

(See comments on "666" at the end of Chapter 13.)

SEVEN

Seven Symbolizes Spiritual Perfection

The word occurs 54 times in the book.

The Whole Word of God is founded upon the number **seven.**

Sevenfold blessing was promised to Abraham (Gen. 12. 2, 3).

Seven parables on the Mysteries of the Kingdom in Matthew, chapter 13.

In Revelation we read of **Seven** Spirits, **Seven** Stars, **Seven** Golden Candlesticks, **Seven** Letters, **Seven** Churches, **Seven**-Sealed Book, **Seven** Angels, **Seven** Trumpets, **Seven** Vials, **Seven** Thunders, **Seven** Last Plagues.

Seven times blessing is promised in Revelation: Chapters 1. 3; 14. 13; 16. 15; 19. 9; 20. 6; 22. 7, 14.

Seven times the Book of Life is mentioned in the book.

There are **Seven** Dispensations—Innocence, Conscience, Government, Pilgrimage, Law, Grace, Millennial Age (on Dispensation, see Remarkable Jew).[1]

EIGHT

Eight is the Number of Resurrection

Eight souls saved in the Ark—Symbol of Resurrection (see 1 Peter 3. 20, 21).

The Gematra (numerical value) of the name "Jesus" is 888.

The number of resurrection thrice repeated.

Eight writers in the New Testament speak of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

On the **eighth** day our Lord rose from the dead.

Eight persons were raised from the dead in the Scriptures apart from our Lord Jesus.

NINE

Nine Speaks of Finality or Divine Completeness

Significantly it is three times three.

Paul mentions **nine** "fruits of the Spirit" in Galatians 5. 22, 23.

At the **ninth** hour our Lord died on the Cross (Matt. 27. 46-50).

TEN

Ten Signifies Perfection of Order

Ten times we read in Genesis 1, "God said."

Ten Plagues sent on the Egyptians.

Ten Commandments were given.

Ten Psalms begin with hallelujah.

A **ten** kingdom confederation is the last phase of human sovereignty (Dan. 2 and 7; Rev. 13 and 17).

TWELVE

Twelve Marks Governmental Perfection and is the Signature of Israel

The word occurs 22 times in the book. Therefore, 144,000 which is 12 × 12,000 (a multiple of 12) means that they accepted Christ as Saviour and their hearts were submitted to the perfect government of the Lamb of God (Rev. 7. 4 and 14. 3). In Revelation 21. 17 it is stated that the city walls were 144 cubits high (or 12 × 12), which symbolises this truth—that there is nothing in God's city which is not perfectly governed. Verse 27 of this chapter is confirmatory.

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That there are 24 Elders (figuring Redeemed Saints)—first mentioned in Chapter 4. 10—is very significant. Twenty-four (or 2×12) distinguishes the elders as separated and as sharing in the heavenly government, for the number 2 is a symbol of division, or separation. In this case it symbolises the separation of the saint from the sinner, or the Church from the World.

It is also significant that only **twelve** judges—who judged Israel—are recorded in the Book of Judges.

THIRTEEN

Thirteen is the Number of Apostasy and Rebellion

All of the names of Satan are divisible by **thirteen.**

The name of reproach given to our Lord on the Cross, "Jesus of Nazareth," is also divisible by **thirteen.**

THE WONDERS OF THE GREAT UNVEILING

Chapter I

THE REMARKABLE REVELATION

THE word "revelation" or apocalypse" means *to take off the veil* or *an unveiling*. If this is a book of prophecy, as is clearly stated in Chapters 1. 1, 2 and 22. 18, 19, then it is a prophecy which is to be understood. Does not the Lord definitely promise blessings to those who read, hear and keep the things written in the Book? Now how can they read, hear, or keep the things written in it, unless they can understand its contents? Does not the Lord also threaten curses upon those who tamper with its message? We can, therefore, see that it is a book of prophecy which is to be read and understood. Then why is it the most neglected book in the whole Bible? Is it not on the plea that it is a book of symbols? But the very name of the book means "manifestation."

Many Christians ask if it is possible to understand the symbols which are given in the book? Certainly it is. And if the reader will go to the Word of God for his information, he will find every symbol mentioned in the book of Revelation is spoken of somewhere in other Scriptures. This point will be amplified in later chapters. It is worth while to note that there are far more explained symbols in this book than symbols which are

unexplained. It can, in many features, be compared to the book of Daniel: but while Daniel was told that he was to shut up the words and seal the book to the time of the end (Daniel 1. 4), John was warned that his writings were *not* to be sealed.

Genesis and Revelation Compared

The word "Genesis" means "the beginnings." It is the acorn of the oak. All revelation and typology have their beginnings in Genesis, while the book of Revelation is the book of the consummations.

We will note a few of these comparisons, which will beautifully illustrate the remarkable place these two books have in relation to one another.

Genesis 1.1 presents the creation of the heavens and the earth, while Revelation 21. 1 tells of the new heaven and the new earth. In Genesis 1. 16 we have the Sun and Moon given to light the earth, and in Revelation 21. 23 these are replaced by the glory of the Lord.

Genesis 2 presents the first man and his wife "Eve" ruling over the old creation which was lost through sin, and Revelation 21 shows the second Man and His bride, "the Church," over a world redeemed by the finished work of Christ.

Genesis 3. 21 gives the account of the first typical sacrifice—a lamb, and Revelation 5. 6 presents the great Antitypical Sacrifice—the Lamb of God, in the midst of the throne. Man was driven away from the tree of life (Gen. 3. 27), but in Revelation 22. 2 he is welcomed back again.

Genesis 3. 6 tells the beginning of man's sin through Satan—the serpent beguiler, and Revelation 20 gives

the account of sin finally judged, and the old Serpent cast into the Lake of Fire.

Genesis 11 gives the beginning of Babel (Babylon) and Revelation 18 the doom of Babylon.

Genesis closes with man in a coffin—result of sin. Revelation closes with Christ's coming and with the promise of victory over death.

Among the many other comparisons which could be given, it is interesting to note that the sin and sorrow of Genesis gives place to the glorious picture in Revelation 21. 4 when all the former things have passed away. The Old Testament itself closes with the word "Curse," but Revelation reveals Christ removing all signs of the curse. "No more curse" (Chap. 22. 3).

The Time of the Writing of the Book

John, the beloved disciple, was banished to the island of Patmos, probably by Emperor Domitian, about 96 A.D., because of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (see Chap. 1. 9). The place of banishment and loneliness, became the place of a most remarkable revelation which is destined to become a source of great blessing to the earnest student of it. How true the words:

> "God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants His footsteps in the sea,
> And rides upon the storm."

The Revelation was not an unveiling "of John," but "of Jesus Christ"—the perfect Man—which God gave unto him. This was revealed to John by some unnamed angel. No other book unveils the Person, Presence, and Power of our Lord as this book does, and in addition to chapters two and three (apart from

verses 8, 12 and 18 in Chapter 1, and verses 1, 7 and 14 in Chapter 2) we have seven other passages which give the direct utterances of our Lord. Such an unveiling makes the book one of tremendous importance. That the things revealed "must shortly come to pass" (v. 1), simply means that the book is prophetic. The word "shortly" is used in a similar sense in Romans 16. 20, "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet *shortly.*" This word gives the certainty of fulfilment, rather than its imminence.

The first three verses contain the brief prologue, after which John gives his salutation to the seven churches in Asia. In the salutation, John invokes grace from Jehovah who, ever-existing, is related to the past and connected with the future. The Eternal One—which is, which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne. This speaks of the fulness of spiritual activity. (Compare the seven spirits mentioned in Isaiah 11. 1, 2).

"BEFORE THE THRONE." The public government of the earth is here outlined, and is one of the main thoughts of the book of Revelation.

In verse 5, John speaks of the Lord as Prophet, Priest and King.

Note His three titles. *First,* He is the Prophet. No one could be called "Faithful and True" but Him. He is described by this name in Chapter 19. 11. He was the true Prophet. He not only revealed God's Word, but was Himself the revelation of that Word (John 1. 1, 14). *Second,* He is the Priest. Not the High Priest who offered animal sacrifices, and brought the blood before the Lord into the Holy of Holies (Heb.

9. 17); but He is the One Who gave Himself as the Substitute Sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 9. 14; 10. 10-12). *Third,* He is also the King. The Prince of the Kings of the earth, supreme above all. There are no superlatives which can adequately describe Him as The Prophet, The Priest, and The King.

Verse 6 reveals the truth of the priesthood of all believers, and verse 7 tells of the certainty that this same Lord—who is our Redeemer in verse 5—is coming down in judgment on the world. This verse applies to the Jew and Gentile, the Church dispensation being viewed as having ended. He closes with the words "even so" (Greek), "Amen" (Hebrew). Affirming to both Jew and Gentile that His Word will not change.

In verse 8, the Lord assumes the title of "LORD GOD," and also takes the title "ALPHA AND OMEGA." These two words are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which intimates the truth that He is the beginning of all things, and His glory is the goal (see also 22. 3).

The full significance of these titles is usually overlooked. He is the "ALPHA"—the beginning. The Word of God commences with the words: "In the beginning God" (Gen. 1. 1). And John also commences his great Gospel by stating: "In the beginning was the Word" (Chap. 1. 1).

He also is the "OMEGA"—the ending. Everything is summed up in Him. These titles speak of His deity. No doubt they show our Lord's relationship to creation.

Immediately follow the words: "Saith the Lord God which is, which was, and which is to come." The na-

ture of Jehovah's being ever abides. Past, present, and future. The ever-existing One. The Eternal God.

The same meaning is seen in the great title "I AM." Moses was told, "Thus thou shalt say to the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod. 3. 14). The Lord Jesus also said to the Jews: "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8. 58). "The Word was God" says John (Chap. 1. 1). "I and my Father are One," says Christ (John 10. 30).

Our blessed Lord is co-existent with the Father. The ever-present Lord.

Therefore these titles, "Alpha" and "Omega," are of still greater significance in relation to His beloved Church.

Some look upon our Lord as but the "beginning" and the "ending"; but what about the long period between?

It is true that He is our Saviour through whom we have known the Father; and all things will be summed up in Him when He will be All in All: but is He not everything to us now?

We cannot live a moment without Him. In prayer we approach the Father through the Son. It is only in His Name, or on His authority, that we have the right to approach God's Mercy Seat. As we read: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10. 19).

To us also He is the past, present, and future. He is the whole alphabet, nor merely the A and Z; He is everything between. What a beautiful expression this really is.

THE PAST. Our Saviour died upon the Cross *for* us.

THE PRESENT. He dwells constantly *with us* (see John 14. 23; and *in* us by His Spirit (see John 14. 17).

THE FUTURE. We are to dwell *with* Him for ever (see 1 Thess. 4. 17). Praise His Holy Name!

The Seven Churches in Asia

In verse 10, John tells us, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Not the day of the Lord, but the Lord's day—which is the first day of the week. The Greek rendering does not make the translation "day of the Lord" permissible. It is the "Lord's day," the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is here definitely referred to.

Then he adds: "I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet." This intimates that something of public importance was about to be communicated to him. John is now told to write "what thou seest." It is important to notice that the future is in view in these words. John was to write what he was about to see, "in a book, and send it to seven churches in Asia." There were a number of other churches in the small province of Asia, but these churches were specially addressed, namely: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Why was it that the Lord picked these out from all others? Why such a selection from that small province in the south-west of Asia Minor? These questions will be answered when we come to examine verse nineteen.

Coming to verse 12, John tells us what he perceived when he turned to see the voice that spake with him. His description is very vivid indeed. He saw seven golden candlesticks (lampstands)—not as in the temple,

which was a seven-branched lampstand, but each of the seven resting on its own base. Verse 20 shows that the seven lampstands were representative of the seven churches already mentioned; but as seven is the number of completeness it is here also symbolic of the whole Church.

The divine glory the Lord has invested in the Church is symbolized by the gold of which the lampstands are made.

What John now sees is given in verses 12 to 16. In the midst of the Churches stands our blessed Lord. Clothed with His judicial garments as the great High Priest and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. Gold here represents divine righteousness. Remember He is Judge as well as Saviour. 1 "His head and His hair white like wool" (compare Dan. 7. 9). 2 "His eyes as a flaming fire" (penetrating judgment). 3 "His feet like fine brass." Brass is always a symbol of Judgment; here it represents the certainty of God's judicial judgments. 4 "His voice as the sound of many waters." The majesty of His voice is mightier than many waters (Psa. 93. 4). 5 "Seven stars were in His right hand." Verse 20 states that the stars were the messengers of the seven churches. 6 "Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." By the simple force of His Word, He executes divine judgment. (As in Creation, "He spake and it was done.")

"His countenance was as the bright shining of the sun." Seeing this, John was overpowered with the vision of His majestic glory, but was bidden by the Lord not to fear, He adding: "I am the First and the Last; I am He that liveth and was dead, and be-

hold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hades and of death."

The Divisions of the Book

Now that we have examined verses 12 to 18, it will be well for us to try to discover what is the true plan of the book, and we may observe that verse 19 very clearly gives us a threefold division of it; and as we examine this verse, we will see that this is given by the Spirit of God for our instruction.

FIRST. John is told to write, "the things which thou hast seen," *i.e.,* what he had already seen as related in Chapter 1.

Did John not state, "I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst one like unto the Son of Man"?

Also, in verse 17, he said, "and when I saw Him I fell at his feet as dead." The Lord also said, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest." These are the things which he had seen. Therefore verses 9-18 comprise the first section.

SECOND. He was told to write the things "which are," *i.e.,* the things existing in the seven churches of Asia, which are mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3.

The seven churches of Asia to which the messages were sent by our Lord were specially chosen because these messages were to give us a prophetic picture of the seven periods of the Church's dispensation, from John's time about 96 A.D. to the time when the Lord calls His people into the air.

THIRD. John was also told to write "the things which shall be hereafter (after these things)." The literal rendering is: "the things that are *about to be* after

these things." In this book of prophecy the rapture of the church is viewed, we believe, as taking place between the third and fourth chapters. Therefore, we are not surprised to read in Chapter 4 that the scene is changed from earth to heaven.

John says: "After this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter (after these things)." We see from this that Chapter 4. 1, to the end of the book, comprises the third section.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER I

1. **Seven Spirits** (v. 4)—see Symbol 52.

2. **The Faithful Witness** (v. 5).—**Christ as Prophet.**

   The only one who could be designated by such a title as "The Faithful Witness." Our Lord came for the very purpose of witnessing and He did not deviate in the slightest degree from that set purpose. In that awful trial He answered Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into this world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18. 37).

   The Greek word "Martus" is only used four times in Revelation. Twice of our Lord in Chapters 1. 5 and 3. 14, once of the two witnesses in Chapter 11. 3, and once of Antipas. It is also used of our Lord in Psalm 89. 37.

3. **The First Begotten of the Dead** (v. 5)—**Christ as Priest.**

   He is "The Firstborn" of those who will be raised. The firstborn had a special rank in the family, so our Lord as the first begotten of the dead is High Priest in the glory.

4. **The Prince of the Kings of the Earth** (v. 5)—**Christ as King.**

   This is well expressed by the Spirit in Psalm 89. 27: "Also I will make Him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." Also His name is described in Revelation 19. 16 as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

5. **Clouds** (v. 7)—**Sign of Jehovah's Presence.** A Symbol of **His Majesty and Glory.**

The cloud went before the Israelites to lead them (Exod. 13. 21).

When **the cloud** abode on the Tabernacle Israel journeyed not (Exod. 40. 36).

The Lord descended in **the cloud** (Exod 34. 5).

The Lord said, "I will appear in **the cloud** on the Mercy Seat" (Lev. 16. 2).

On the Mount of Transfiguration **the cloud** overshadowed Him (Luke 9. 36; Matt. 17. 5).

Our Lord at His ascension, **a cloud** received Him (Acts 1. 9).

We are going to be caught up in **the clouds** (1 Thess. 4. 17).

When the Lord comes to judge He will come **with clouds** (Chap. 1. 7).

The cloud left Palestine and did not return until the Lord appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. It again left Palestine when the Lord ascended and will not return until the Lord stands on the Mount of Olives (see Symbol 131).

6. **Alpha and Omega** (v. 8).

The first and last letters respectively of the Greek alphabet. A title used by the Lord God for a description of Himself as the beginning of all things. The beginning of creation and of all truth, and His glory as the end. Because our Lord Jesus Christ was the God-man John could write of Him as follows: "He was God." "All things were made by Him," "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." He alone could have such dignity and honour ascribed to Him for no other could say: "I and My Father are one." The symbols are only found four times in Chapters 1. 8, 11; 21. 6; 22. 13. (See discussion on verse.)

7. **Candlesticks** (v. 12)—**Churches.**

Lampstand is the real meaning of this word. Witness-bearing is the main thought. The lampstand in the Tabernacle was to give light and was never to go out (Exod. 35. 14; 27. 20). Its source of light was the oil which is the symbol of the Holy Spirit.

The church is the light-bearer to the world. The source of

its shining is the Holy Spirit. Its testimony was never to go out. Christ said: "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5. 14).

This word is used seven times in Revelation. Six times in the plural (Chap. 1. 12, 13, 20, twice; 2. 1; 11. 4), and once in the singular (Chap. 2. 5), where the Lord tells Ephesus that unless she repents He will remove her candlestick (testimony), or her right to stand as a church, out of its place.

8. **Son of Man** (v. 13).

This title is used by the Lord Himself. As "Son of God" the dead shall hear His voice (John 5. 25). As "Son of Man" He executeth judgment committed to Him (John 5. 27).

It is peculiarly a title for the Lord, though God used it in addressing Ezekiel and Daniel as a sign of peculiar honour; this is evidenced by the remarkable prophecies given to them.

9. **Clothing and the Girdle** (v. 13)—**Judicial Robes.** Also alludes to the **Garments of the High Priest.**

Priestly judgment is here signified, for our Lord is now seen as the Priest-King who is soon to act as Judge.

The High Priest was girded with a girdle of fine white linen with needlework of blue, purple and scarlet (Exod. 39. 29).

The linen girdle was a symbol of righteousness which could only be secured through Christ whom it typified. The blue, purple and scarlet respectively pointing to His heavenly, kingly and redemptive character.

The Lord in our chapter did not wear a girdle which typified the work of the Cross, for His work was now completed. He was girt with that which symbolised His righteousness and faithfulness as Isaiah 11. 5 states, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

10. **White Like Wool** (v. 14).

Attributes of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7. 9).

The head speaks of wisdom, and white of purity. Seeing that this is a description of our Lord, could there be a more perfect symbol of His wisdom in absolute purity, which reveals His divine glory.

11. **Eyes as a Flame of Fire** (v. 14).

A. **Fire** is the element which consumes. In Scripture it is a symbol

1. **Of God's Presence.**

The Burning Bush (Exod. 3. 2).
Pillar of Fire (Exod. 13. 21).
Descended in Fire (Exod. 19. 18; Acts 2. 3).

2. **Of God's Glory.**
   The glory of the Lord is like devouring fire (Exod. 24. 17).
3. **Of Judgment on Wicked.**
   On Sodom and Gomorrah—Fire (Gen. 19. 24).
   Our God is a Consuming Fire (Heb. 12. 9).
   Fire came Down from Heaven (Rev. 20. 9).
   Cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20. 15).
   Fire of My Wrath (Ezek. 21. 31).
4. **Of Judgment for Blessing.**
   Fire from the Lord consumed the Offering (Lev. 9. 24; 2 Chron. 7. 1).
   I will bring a third part through the fire (Zech. 13. 9).
   Fire shall try every man's works (1 Cor. 3. 13).

B. **Eyes** are used to penetrate or search. Therefore the whole expression, "Eyes as a flaming fire," speaks of His attributes of penetrating judgment. Eyes are also a symbol of intelligence, which reveals the fact that the Lord has perfect understanding and discernment.

12. **His Feet Like Unto Fine Brass** (v. 15)—See comments on Chapter 10. 1.

Brass is a symbol of judgment.

God's judgment on the substitute as typified in the **Brazen** altar (Exod. 38. 1, 2).

Self judgment as seen in the use of the **Brazen laver** (Exod. 38. 8).

God's justice satisfied in the **Brazen** Serpent as a type of the Cross (Num. 21. 9; John 3. 14).

His Feet symbolic of absolute authority, control, or victory over enemy (Psa. 8. 6; 1 Cor. 15. 25; Eph. 1. 22; Heb. 2. 8).

Furnace, figures that which completely consumes—or refines by completely consuming the dross (Ezek. 22. 18; 20. 22).

The whole expression represents the certainty and completeness of God's judicial judgment (see Dan. 10. 6).

13. **His Voice Like the Sound of Many Waters** (v. 15).

This means that His power and majesty are overwhelming (compare Psa. 93. 4; Ezek. 1. 24; 43. 2).

Matthew 8. 26 contains a realistic illustration.

14. **In His Right Hand Seven Stars** (v. 16).

"The Right Hand" is the hand of power.

"In His Right Hand" means that these seven stars are in

the place of authority and honour over which our Lord has absolute power and control (Read Psa. 18. 35; 20. 6; Isa. 62. 8; Acts 5. 31; Heb. 1. 13).

"Seven Stars" are the messengers of the seven churches (v. 20). As stars reflect derived light, so these stars shine for Christ, but under His authority only.

The soul winner is compared to the shining of the stars Dan. 12. 3).

The false teachers are called wandering stars (Jude 13).

Our business is to shine, to be luminaries in the midst of the world's dark night.

15. **Out of His Mouth Went a Sharp Two-edged Sword** (v. 16).

That which God spake will surely come to pass.

Our Lord does not need to touch His enemies: to speak is enough.

His own personal word is that which is searching in its judgment as is the Word of God in Hebrews 4. 12 (see Symbol 38).

16. **His Countenance as the Sun, etc.** (v. 16)—The full shining of God's glory seen in the face of the Son of Man (cf. Exod. 34. 30; Matt. 17. 2).

17. **The First and the Last** (v. 17)—See Symbol 6.

18. **Keys of Hades and of Death** (v. 18).

A **Key** is that which both locks and unlocks. In our verse it represents complete authority over Hades and Death. Keys of the Kingdom (Matt. 16. 19) fulfilled in Acts 10. Key of Knowledge (Luke 11. 52) a cure against the doctors of the law. The expression implies that our Lord has power over bodies (death), and souls (hades) of men. Contrast this with the evil work of Babylon which deals in slaves (bodies) and souls of men (Rev. 18. 13).

19. **Mystery** (v. 20).—Occurs 27 times in the Scriptures.

The revelation to the initiated of that truth which was previously a secret, but which still retains a supernatural element.

Candlestick (v. 20).—See Symbol 7.

Stars (v. 20).—See Symbol 14.

Right Hand (v. 20).—See Symbol 14.

Seven (v. 20).—See the Significance of Numbers on page 24.

20. **Angels** (v. 20)—or representatives of the Churches (Assemblies) (see Chaps. 2. 1, 8, 12, 18; 3. 1, 7, 14).

Chapter II

THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE BOOK

The Messages to the Seven Churches

TO every one of the churches named, the Lord says: "I know thy works." He describes conditions as they are in those churches and we will see how each message, as well as the name of each church, gives a remarkable historic preview of the seven successive periods of this present church age. The approximate dates of these periods prophesied are: (1) Ephesus, 95 A.D. (John's Day); (2) Smyrna, 95-315 A.D.; (3) Pergamos, 315-500; (4) Thyatira, 500-1500; (5) Sardis, 1500-1800; (6) Philadelphia, 19th Century; (7) Laodicea, 20th Century.

(1) Ephesus (Chap. 2. 1-7).

The name "Ephesus" means "desirable," which describes the love of the Lord for His church. This is the only church of the seven about which we know anything of its founding.

The Lord is described as walking in the midst of His Churches, seeing everything within them. He commends Ephesus for dealing with the Judaisers, and for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. (See comments on v. 15.)

But the Lord condemns this first church for leaving its first love. He warns it to come back and do its first works, else He would remove its testimony out of its place. Oh, the seriousness of continuing in the letter,

but forgetting the spirit. In the midst of the failure, the Lord promises that the overcomer shall eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God (R.V.). Paradise really means "pleasure garden," and is here a synonym for the sum of all spiritual enjoyment.

(2) SMYRNA (Chap. 2. 8-11).

The name "Smyrna" means "myrrh." This represents the Martyr period under the Roman Empire. As myrrh only gives out its fragrance when crushed, so the sweetest fragrance ascended to God during this period. Judaism was rampant. Men were claiming to be Jews but were of Satan. Great suffering was threatened, but the Crown of Life was the reward for faithfulness (v. 10, the future tense reveals the prophetic).

The "ten days" of tribulation probably refer to the ten distinct attempts by imperial edicts, to crush out the infant Church. The approximate dates are as follows:

Under Nero, ...	54 A. D.	Maximin, ...	235 A. D.
Domitian, ...	81 A. D.	Decius, ...	249 A. D.
Trojan, ...	98 A. D.	Valerian, ...	254 A. D.
Antoninus, ...	117 A. D.	Aurelian, ...	270 A. D.
Severus, ...	195 A. D.	Diocletian, ...	284 A. D.

Is it not remarkable that the persecutions during this period were exactly ten?

The wonderful promise (v. 10): "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," has been found engraved many times on the walls of the catacombs of Rome.

(3) PERGAMOS (Chap. 2. 12-17).

The name "Pergamos" means both "marriage" and "elevation." The church had just passed through the

martyr period, and soon entered into the period ushered in by Emperor Constantine. He professed to accept Christianity, and still kept to his heathenish title, "Pontifex Maximus."

During this period the great Arian controversy took place, and the Nicaean Creed was formulated to offset the approach of Unitarianism. Prior to this the church was in the world, but not a part of it; but now the church received imperial favour. Christianity was *religio licita* instead of *religio illicita, i.e.,* a legal religion instead of an illegal religion, and the world came into the church. It was now set upon Constantine's throne. The name Pergamos certainly received its true meaning, for the church became *married* to the world, and *elevated* to the throne. The change from heathen temples to Christian churches, and from heathen priests to Christian priests, was only a matter of form, for the church adopted many heathen rites and ceremonies. Thousands of soldiers were publicly baptised, but their baptism was into imperial favour merely, and not into Christ.

The truth of the Lord's second coming was preached, but now bishops constantly affirmed that Constantine's throne was Christ's kingdom. This church was accused of Balaamism, which referred to spiritual fornication carried on inside the church by false teachers for material gain.

It is significant that verse 15 refers to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. In verse 6, as already noted, we have the term "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes; here we have "doctrine." The name "Nicolaitanes" means "victorious people"; and as it is prophecy of things inside

the church, it refers to those who were trying to domineer over the laity. It was the beginning of priestcraft which had become a settled doctrine in verse 15. This condition of things was a preparation for the Thyatira period.

In verse 16, the Lord makes a serious call to His church to repent. He states that if they do not He will come unto them quickly and fight against them with the *sword of His mouth.*

The words used in Chapter 1. 16 refer to the same thing: "Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

Speaking of the unrepentant sinner, our Lord said in John 12. 48:

> "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day."

It is to be noted that the very word our Lord uttered is to the rejecter a word of judgment. The Scripture just quoted speaks of the judgment of the unbeliever at God's great tribunal in the last day, (see Chap. 20. 12-15); but our text (Chap. 2. 16) has definite reference to a more immediate judgment, and one which takes place on earth.

The *mouth* is the source, the *sword* is the weapon; meaning that it is what the Lord says which is the judgment. Our Lord is stating that if the ungodly ones in this church continue to dishonour Him, He will speak the word of condemnation. It behooves us to be always faithful to Him who called us out of darkness into light; not that we are in danger of losing our salvation, but the ruin of our testimony. (For further information, see "The Judgment Seat of Christ."[6])

To the overcomer the Lord promises unique rewards.

1. "The Hidden Manna." The main word is "manna," the secondary one is the word "hidden." Whatever the word manna is a symbol of to-day, something in regard to it is hidden from us. The manna which came down from heaven sustained the physical lives of the people of Israel; while Christ as the Bread of God which came down from heaven, is the source and sustainer of our spiritual lives.

What is it that is hidden from us? The answer can be suggested by asking another question: Can we comprehend what it cost our Lord to give up the glory with His Father, and come down to die that awful cruel death upon Calvary's cross? If we are not able to enter into the depths of the agony and sufferings which He endured, then it is hidden from us. In other words, He will take the overcomer into His confidence, and reveal what it cost Him to express His love for us. What a love link! (See Symbol 39.)

2. "A White Stone," and on the stone will be written "a new name," to be known only to the receiver. Chapter 3. 12 probably gives a hint when it says: "I will write upon him . . . My new name."

Black and white stones were used in the Jewish Sanhedrim to decide respectively the guilt or innocence of and the displeasure or favour to those who were brought before it. It was also a method of justice in the days of long ago. We understand that many secret societies use it to-day. This symbol is a well-known one. Therefore to be given a white stone by the Lord indicates His warmest approval and favour because of one's faithfulness on earth. Is it not worth while to give our best in service for the Lord? (See Symbol 40.)

(4) THYATIRA (Chap. 2. 18-29).

The name "Thyatira" is from two words meaning "sacrifice" (or incense offering) and "a continual offering of the same." One Greek scholar gives the name this meaning, "a sacrifice whose transcendent lustre is dimmed by repetition." In both cases "a continual sacrifice" is suggested.

Is it not true that the Romish sacrifice of the mass is here prophesied? How remarkable is this prophecy, for every time the Romish priest celebrates the Mass he maintains that the Lord Jesus is sacrificed again not only for the sins of the living, but also of the dead. This act certainly belittles Christ's "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. 10. 10-14).

The statement of the Lord, in verse 18, must not be lightly passed over: "These things saith the Son of God." The Lord here uses the title to emphasize the indisputable fact that He is the Supreme One. During the period of Thyatira—approximately 500 to 1500 A.D.—the teaching of Mariolatry began, which delegated the Lord to second place. The title used by Him in this verse allows no modification of His divine prerogatives.

It was during this period—in the seventh century—that the Bishop of Rome came into his ascendancy. There can be no doubt that the Pergamos period prepared for it as we have stated. Priestcraft was increasing and imperial favour was destroying the very purpose of God, who was calling out a people from the world for Himself. The rise of the Papacy is described in verse 20, as the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, but was allowed to teach and to seduce

the Lord's servants to commit fornication (false teaching), and to eat things sacrificed to idols. It is worth noting that the whole of Romish teaching finds its source in Babylonian idolatry, including the declaration that Mary is the Queen of Heaven. (This may be seen in detail in Hislop's "Two Babylons."[5])

If one reads in 1 Kings 18. 13-16 and 21. 1-16, the two acts of Jezebel related therein, they will find but a minute picture of the past history of the Church of Rome.

The Lord gives a significant word in verse 21: "I gave her space to repent of her fornication and she repented not." The last clause correctly reads: "She willeth not to repent." That great ecclesiastical system—Roman Catholicism—never repents. Her motto, used by many Roman Catholic writers, *"Semper adem"* (always the same), is perfectly true of her whole sordid history. "She never changes," though in reality her doctrine has continually changed to suit her advancing claims.

From verse 24 the Lord is addressing the faithful few, who are living in the midst of this awful apostate condition. As church history shows, there were very faithful companies of believers—often designated by different names—who were standing true during the dark ages of Thyatira. They were suffering enough through the religious opposition to the truth: therefore it was just like the Lord to give this comforting prophetic message to them in the words: "I will lay upon you none other burden." (See 1 Cor. 10. 13.)

Those of this Thyatiran period are bidden to "hold fast till He come" (v. 25).

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER II

21. **Angel** (vv. 1, 8, 12, etc.). Messenger, Term "Angel of the Church" means "Messenger" or "Representative of the Church."

22. **Candlestick** (v. 5).—**Lampstand.** The only place where it is found in Revelation in the singular. As the "Lamp" speaks of profession; "Oil" of the Holy Spirit; "Light" illumination through the Holy Spirit; therefore "Lampstand" symbolises testimony. See Symbol 7.

23. **I will Give to him to Eat of the Tree of Life** (v. 7).

This is an interesting expression—the first promise that God gave to the overcomer—which turns our minds back to the story of the Garden of Eden. As God had created man for fellowship, the Cherubim, and a flaming sword, proclaimed not only the Lord's essential holiness, but also His abhorrence of sin.

Note the words in Gen. 3. 22, 24: "And the Lord God said, Behold . . . lest he (the man) put forth his hand, and take also of the **Tree of Life**. . . . He drove out the man: and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the **way** of the true life."

While man was in his sin, God in His gracious mercy, kept and guarded the **way** to the tree of life. This tree could not be enjoyed until man was redeemed and restored by the new creation in Christ Jesus. The scene in Gen. 3. 24 was a prophecy of God's mercy, which could not be **revealed** until Christ died and rose again; and it cannot be **fulfilled** as a prophecy until we see Him face to face.

We now understand that the scene presented to the gaze of the Christian overcomer is one of a far more glorious character than that of Genesis 2. Here we have the Paradise of God with its tree of life, of which one may freely eat and no trace of good and evil, the symbol of creature responsibility. The life of innocence (Gen. 2) was dependent on obedience. But here the tree of life, Eternal life in its full character of blessedness, is enjoyed, without alloy, without fear of failure. Eternal Life becomes the everlasting feast of the conqueror in the Paradise of God.

24. **In the Paradise of God** (Lit. rend., v. 7).

The word "Paradise" occurs three times in the New Testament (Luke 23. 43; 2 Cor. 12. 4; Rev. 2. 7). It is of Oriental derivation meaning "pleasure garden." It is three times used in this sense in the Old Testament. The word Paradise is not used of the Garden of Eden. Nehemiah 2. 8 translated "forest"; Ecclesiastes 2. 5, Songs of Solomon 4. 13 "Orchard." Paradise is an actual place existing now and in the risen state. Moses never employs the word. Solomon is the first to do so. To the Oriental mind "Paradise" is the expression and sum of blessedness. The Paradise of God is the expression of heaven's blessedness. It is an actual place of which the earthly garden (Gen. 2) was but a shadow. Here the blessedness is fixed and eternal. Paradise is the sum of all enjoyment, the aggregate of all pleasure, promised to the converted dying robber, and "into which Paul was caught. It is the special and unique promise held out to the overcomer in the Ephesian state of the Church" *(W. Scott)*.

25. **First and Last** (v. 8).—See Symbol 6.

26. **Rich** (v. 9). Our inheritance is in Him (Eph. 1. 11; 1 Cor. 3. 21-23).

27. **Synagogue of Satan** (v. 9).

The synagogue was the Jewish assembly, therefore this expression means the assembly of Satan (adversary).

When the Roman Empire brought a country under its control —we mention this in discussing Pergamos—it tolerated the then existing religion; but any new one arising after the Roman conquest was illegal. Judaism was therefore tolerated, but Christianity was not.

To circumvent this law, numbers of the Jews—who professed to be Christians—maintained to the authorities that they kept the law, therefore were Jews.

Many also who were not Jews did the same, but for one purpose only—to slander the church.

The faithful Smyrna Church was being opposed by the intrigues of the Judaisers who desired the church to compromise with the truth, and to avoid persecution.

This attitude showed that they were energised and led by their master—Satan.

28. **Devil** (v. 10).—Slanderer.
He slandered them and caused the enemy to persecute them.

29. **Ten Days** (v. 10).
Ten distinct imperial edicts issued to crush them.

30. **Crown of Life** (v. 10).
Only referred to twice in the New Testament. In one verse it is the Martyr's Crown given to the one who is faithful unto death. In James 1. 12 it is promised to the one who in faithfulness endures trials and whose love is undimmed by tribulations.

31. **Second Death** (v. 11).—The Lake of Fire (Chap. 20. 14).
The enemy can kill the body, but the soul is in the Lord's keeping.

32. **Sword with Two Edges** (v. 12).—See Symbols 15 and 38.

33. **Where Thou Dwellest** (v. 13).
Earth-dwellers instead of true sojourners, a fearful designation of utter worldliness. (For illustration see Heb. 11. 8-16.) See Symbol 114.

34. **Satan's Seat (Throne)** (v. 13).
The reign of Constantine enhanced the rule of Satan though primarily the term refers to Pergamos which took the lead in the deification of the Roman Emperors.

35. **Antipas** (v. 13).
Not known, though many were martyred during this period. There was an Antipas in the second century, according to Church history, but he does not seem to have been an important or noted, person in the Church.

36. **Balaam and Balac** (v. 14).
This has reference to the awful character of Balaam, who being compelled to bless Israel instead of cursing them, planned the diabolical scheme of Israel's adulterous temptations with the Moabitish woman (Num. 25. 1, 2; 31. 16) so that he could receive King Balac's reward (Jude 11). He knew that for such sin God would Himself curse and punish Israel (Num. 25. 3-9). The sin cost Balaam his life (Num. 31. 8), and the Midianites their victory (Num. 29).
The adultery with the world was permitted in this church and God severely warns her.

37. **Nicolaitanes** (v. 15).—The Victorious People.

From *Nikao* (to conquer) and *laos* (the people).

These false teachers tried to domineer over the laity and were responsible for the advance of Priestcraft.

38. **The Sword of My Mouth** (v. 16).—The Word of God.

"The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6. 17).

"For the Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4. 12). A similar expression is used by Isaiah of himself after he had warned them from the Lord. "And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword" (Chap. 49. 2). See Symbol 15.

39. **I Will Give of the Hidden Manna** (v. 17).

"To eat" is not in the original text.

The Lord said that He would give the hidden manna to the overcomer.

A pot of manna was put in the Ark (Exod. 16. 34; Heb. 9. 4). This was hidden from the eyes of man for about 500 years. Christ said that the manna from heaven was a type of the true bread from heaven—Himself (John 6. 32, 33). "I am the true bread which came down from heaven . . . the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (v. 51). This speaks of His humiliation. He came down from heaven to be a man (The God-Man) and die. It is the story of His humiliation which was typified by this "hidden manna." This means that the Lord will reveal to the overcomer, when He gets to glory, the mystery and wonder of that humiliation. What a closeness of fellowship is revealed here.

40. **A White Stone, etc.** (v. 17).

In the days of the Greeks and Romans a white stone was a symbol of joy or of acquittal. In festivities it was sometimes given to a guest as a special favour, and on it would be written the favourite name of the giver.

Christ says that He will give to the overcomer a white stone on which **He** will place **His name** and by which **He** will be known to the receiver only.

What a close love link will bind the overcomer to His Lord. It will express the Lord's special appreciation and joy to the one who puts Him first.

41. **Son of God** (v. 18). His close relation to God—His deity. See Symbol 8.

42. **His Eyes as a Flame of Fire** (v. 18).—See Symbol 11.

43. **His Feet Lke Fine Brass** (v. 18).—See Symbol 12.

44. **Jezebel** (v. 20).

The meaning of the name Jezebel is "No Habitation." She was the corrupt and idolatrous Queen of Israel. Ahab was king in name only. She led Israel into the awful sin of Baal worship, for which she paid a bitter price. Her name truly describes her character.

This woman represents the Church of Rome, which was coming into existence at the time of this Thyatiran period.

Compare the end of the life of Jezebel (2 Kings 9. 36, 37) with Babylon's destruction (Rev. 17. 16; 18. 21).

45. **Fornication** (v. 20).—Spiritual fornication.

Unfaithfulness to God and to His word.

46. **Adultery** (v. 22).

The only place where this word is used in Revelation. It figures the uniting of the Church with the world in its sin, which is the worst form of unfaithfulness to Christ.

47. **Bed** (v. 22).

The place where one lies. Here the scene is the great Tribulation. Verses 22, 23 are fulfilled in Chapter 17. 18. (For symbol of God's care compare Psa. 41. 3.)

48. **Kill with Death** (v. 23).

If these words were used in reference to the body, the expression would be absurdly tautological; therefore it is entirely figurative. It means Moral Death or Apostasy from God. It is certainly apparent that wherever this religious system—which is referred to in the Thyatiran letter—holds sway, it stultifies the moral stamina of the majority of its devotees, and acts as a deterrent to the uplifting of the nation.

49. **Searcheth the Reins and Hearts** (v. 23).

He sees right into the inner recesses of the heart. Man may conceal his thoughts and acts from others, but nothing is hidden from God.

50. **Depths of Satan** (v. 24). As we would say, "Depths of sin."
Verses 26, 27 will be fulfilled because we shall be Kings and Priests unto God (Chap. 5. 10).

51. **The Morning Star** (v. 28).
The Lord calls Himself the "Bright and Morning Star" (Ch. 22. 17). This is a title to the church. But to Israel He calls Himself "The Sun of Righteousness" who will arise with healing in His wings.

The Morning Star arises before the Sun. Is not this a beautiful figure to the Church, that represents our Lord as rising for His Church (Rapture) before He shines as the Sun of Righteousness to Israel.

In that day every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holiness to the Lord (Zech 14. 21).

Chapter III

THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE BOOK

The Messages to the Seven Churches
(Continued)

(5) Sardis (Chap. 3. 1-6).

THE name "Sardis" means "things remaining" or "a remnant." How truly this name prophesied that there would be a remnant of faithful ones who would escape from the Thyatiran period.

The last clause in verse 1, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," perfectly described this period. The Reformation freed the Church from Romanism, but it soon lapsed into cold formalism. Protestantism became a mere name. No unbiased person will question the fact that the Reformation was a mighty work of the Holy Spirit, but soon there were only a few who did not defile their garments with the lifeless formality, which marked the close of this Sardian period (v. 4).

It is worth noting that Stettar of Strasburg was hounded through Germany for allowing lay members to speak in the church, and for holding midweek prayer meetings. The Haldanes of Scotland were similarly treated. Their desire to preach the Gospel in India was frustrated. Were not these some of "the few names" in Sardis, whom the Lord commends.

(6) PHILADELPHIA (Chap. 3. 7-13).

The name "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love." The few names in Sardis, who had not defiled their garments, comprise the Philadelphia Church.

This church and that of Smyrna are the only ones of the seven with which the Lord finds no fault.

How significant is the statement of the Lord, "I have set before thee an *open door,* and no man can shut it." This represents the last century when the foreign fields were continually opening to the Gospel. It is prophetic of the time which is correctly called the modern missionary period, when the great missionary pioneers went forth, amongst whom were the Haldanes, the Wesleys, Carey, Judson, Morrison, Hudson Taylor, Moffat, Livingstone, Hannington, Paton, etc., etc.

The overcomer in this church is promised a remarkable reward. He is to be a pillar in God's Temple.

(7) LAODICEA (Chap. 3. 14-22).

The name "Laodicea" means "people's rights." Chapters 2 and 3 comprise, as we have seen, the whole of the Church's dispensation on earth; so this Laodicean message prophesies of the closing days of the Church just prior to the glorious rapture.

The titles which our Lord uses for Himself in this letter (v. 14) are significant: (1) "Amen" (*i.e.,* true, see 2 Cor. 1. 20); (2) "Faithful and True Witness"; (3) "The Beginning of the Creation of God." The first declares His unchangeability; the second refers to the fact that He alone could be the faithful and true as God's witness; the third asserts His deity and creatorship. These things are all denied by this present Lao-

dicean age, which would deify man and humanize Christ. This gives the reason why the Lord so definitely asserts His pre-eminence in all things. (Read carefully Col. 1. 15-19; Heb. 1. 1-3.)

The Lord has no commendation to give to this Laodicean Church. It is a perfect description in prophecy of the church of the present day. It has become the people's church, not the Lord's church. Men everywhere—inside the church as well as outside—are demanding their rights, irrespective of the claims of the Word of God. It is a *lukewarm* age indeed—as verses 15 and 16 state, an age of *compromise* in essential matters. At the same time there is displayed that egotism which makes man believe that the glory of God is being seen in the inauguration of such modern movements as "The Fellowship of Faiths" (the sole aim of which is to unite all world religions irrespective of their beliefs). The wretchedness of such a condition is described by the Lord in verses 17 and 18, and it would be well for the lifeless formalist, and the lukewarm professor, to take serious heed to the words contained in these verses.

The appeal of our Lord in verse 19 is very impressive indeed. The literal rendering is: "As many as I *dearly love,* I rebuke and *discipline,* be zealous therefore, and repent." What teaching there is for us in this statement, and in that of Hebrews 12. 6: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." (Read Heb. 12. 6-12.) What encouragement there is here for the believer at the hour of testing.

One of the most pathetic scenes given to us is symbolized in the words of verse 20. It presents a vivid picture of our Blessed Lord—the Rejected One—standing outside. Yes! shut out of the place that professes

to honour His name. This verse is so important that we quote it in full: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." This verse contains a very beautiful message. The Lord stands at the "door" and knocks. The singular pronoun "him" and "he" clearly shows that the individual is referred to, and not the church as a whole. The literal rendering reveals a more pathetic note: "Behold, I stand at the door and *am knocking.*" The Lord stands at the door of the heart and says: "If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

That remarkable painting, "The Light of the World," which was sent round the world to be hung in art galleries for inspiration, depicts truly this scene. The latch, which unfastens the door, is on the inside. The Lord is on the outside. His appeal is a pathetic one. In it He uses two expressions, "I will sup with him," and "he with Me." The meaning of this can be illustrated in the following way:

If you invite a friend to dine in your home, you spread before him proofs of your hospitality and he partakes of the same. If your friend invites you to his home, he acts in a similar manner. Now the Lord says, "If anyone will open his heart to Me, I will come in to him, and will partake of the gifts that he offers to Me, and then I will open My treasures and will pour out upon him such an abundant supply," in other words, "he will sup with Me."

This is the reward for true consecration.

If the Laodicean heart does not open to Him, verse

16 will of certainty be fulfilled. "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

What a perfect picture of the present-day church is given in this message to Laodicea! And just as truly as this message applies to this day, so do the seven letters as a whole give a marvellous chronological picture of the whole dispensation of the Church from the close of the Apostolic day to the rapture of the Church.

The Lord's Coming Unfolded

Though these seven letters—as we have already stated—give a chronological picture of the seven periods of this dispensation, they also give a sevenfold message to the church of to-day. Therefore the warnings and promises contained therein have a present application also.

In addition to this we will see that these seven letters fall into two groups. Those written to Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos have a different ending compared with those to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. In the former three the call to the hearer precedes the promise to the overcomer; but in the latter four, the promise to the overcomer precedes the call to the hearer. There are two reasons for this, for though the last four letters primarily and mainly applied to their own respective periods in this dispensation, the conditions mentioned in each of these will continue to the end of the age.

Are not the religious conditions of Thyatira continuing? Yes! remarkably so. The same can be said of the formality of Sardis, of the missionary enthusiasm of Philadelphia, and of the lukewarmness and compromise of Laodicea.

The second reason is that the church was so to apostatize that special appeal should be made to the overcomer as the *first* thing in the closing of these four letters. That is, the overcomer stands related to the call rather than to the church, as is the case in the first three letters.

It is interesting to observe that in these four letters already referred to (because they continue to the end of the age) the Lord makes special reference to His coming.

To THYATIRA. He briefly mentions it in the words, "That which we have, hold fast *till I come*" (Chap. 2. 25).

To SARDIS—which represents cold formalism without any sign of the new birth—the Lord says: "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Chap. 3. 3). He is here speaking to the mere professors of His name, to whom He will come as a thief. To a Christian He does not come so, "for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven *with a shout* (not the *silence* of a thief) and we shall be caught up to be with the Lord in the air."

What a contrast there is between "coming as a thief" and "taking us up to be with Himself."

No wonder the Lord states (notwithstanding the sin and deadness), "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white for they are worthy" (v. 4).

To these He will not come as a thief, but only to those who are not His own. How we need to ask ourselves, "Are we really born again?"

To PHILADELPHIA no word of reproval is given.

Because this church shows every evidence of the new birth our Lord gives to it a wonderful promise and prophecy as a source of real encouragement.

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation (trial) which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth" (Chap. 3. 10, 11).

This "hour of trial" spoken of in this verse is the period of tribulation which will come on the earth after the church has been taken up to be with the Lord. It is coming on all earth-dwellers (unconverted). The Christian is a sojourner, for "here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13. 14).

The Lord continues with an urge and a warning, "Behold I come quickly: hold thou fast that which thou (the faithful one mentioned in verse 10) hast, that no man take thy crown (reward) (v. 11)." (Read Chap. 22. 12 and 1 Thess. 4. 13-18.)

To LAODICEA—a church which is lukewarm and compromising—our blessed Lord appeals for the opening of the heart to let Him in to dwell. It is only to the church of brotherly love (which shows evidence of the new birth) that He gives that great encouragement, but to Laodicea He desires to see *their* heart opened (an individual responsibility) for His presence.

The Lord is not appealing to sinners, but to His unfaithful ones; neither is there any suggestion here—nor anywhere else in Scripture—to support the theory of a partial rapture. (See explanation already given of verse 20.)

The earthly fortunes of the church end with this chapter.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER III

52. **Seven Spirits of God** (v. 1).

The full and complete attributes and operations of the Holy Spirit. Compare Isaiah 11. 2.

Seven Stars (v. 1).—See Symbol 14.

53. **Dead** (v. 1).—Lifeless Formalism.

54. **White Raiment** (v. 5).—Christ's Righteousness.

White stands for purity which is only possible through Christ. Chapter 7. 14 illustrates this passage.

55. **Book of Life** (v. 5).

The Book containing the record of Christian profession, true or false—Not the Lamb's Book of Life as given in Chapters 13. 8; 17. 8; 20. 15.

56. **Key of David,** etc. (v. 7).—(On word "Key," see Symbol 18.)

This verse is synonymous with Isaiah 22. 22, but verse 21 shows that Isaiah refers to Judah and Jerusalem, but our verse is clearly seen to apply to the Church.

The same one who can unlock doors for the Gospel can also close the same.

57. **Synagogue of Satan** (v. 9).—See Symbol 27.

58. **Out of the Hour of Temptation,** etc. (v. 10).

This verse does not state that the Lord will **take** us out of the hour of temptation (trial). This would imply that we must go into it. Instead of that, we clearly read, "I will **keep** him out."

This shows that the rapture of the Church will take place before the Tribulation commences on the earth.

59. **Dwell on the Earth** (v. 10).—Earth Dwellers.—See Symbol 33.

60. **Pillar in the Temple of My God** (v. 12).

Solomon set up two pillars in the porch of the new Temple (1 Kings 7. 21) which he called "Jachin" (He shall establish) and the other one "Boaz" (In it is strength).

Our words allude to these pillars. So the overcomer will find in God's Sanctuary above "establishment and strength."

61. **Go No More Out** (v. 12).—Eternal Abiding.

Name of my God and my new name (see Symbol 40).

62. **New Jerusalem,** etc. (v. 12).—See Chapter 21. 10.

63. **Amen** (v. 14.)—Truly or Truth—A Title of Our Lord.

64. **Faithful and True Witness** (v. 14).—On "faithful witness," see Symbol 2.

Chapter 19. 11 reveals Christ as Horseman whose name is faithful and true. Though unfaithfulness, untruth, and heresies abound, He never changes. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

65. **The Beginning of the Creation of God** (v. 14).

In this Laodicean period when men are denying Christ's deity, there is a great need to proclaim this as our Lord's title. John 1. 3; Colossians 1. 15, 16 proclaim Him as the beginning of Creation. Colossians 1. 18 reveals Him as the Head of the Church, the beginning, the first born of the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

66. **Buy** (v. 18).—(Compare Isa. 55. 1.)

67. **Gold** (v. 18).—Divine Righteousness.

68. **White Raiment** (v. 18).—In the original text this is a plural word, meaning "white garments," or our righteous acts. When this word is in the singular number it always refers to Christ's righteousness.

Chapter 19. 8 brings light on this verse. It states: "Fine linen is the righteousness of saints." But do we not read in Isa. 64. 8, Israel's estimate of herself? "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Also the apostle's word in Rom. 3. 10: "But there is none righteous, no, not one." How then can these white garments be the righteousness of saints? The verse answers itself. The Lord says: "I counsel thee to buy of **Me** . . . white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." These white raiments are only secured through Christ. It was this truth, which Paul referred to when he wrote: "That I might be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ." Again we read: "For He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

69. **Eye-salve** (v. 18).—To secure spiritual perception.

70. **Door** (v. 20).—Heart of the believer.

71. **To Sup** (v. 20).—Is to feast and rejoice together.

Chapter IV

THE THIRD DIVISION OF THE BOOK

WE have already seen that Chapter 1. 19 contains the instructions to John as to the method which he was to adopt in writing this book. He was not left to his own devices, for as already shown, the instructions were explicit. The book was to be divided into *three divisions.* Chapter One contained the first division—the record of the things he had seen. Chapters Two and Three—the second division, which contain the marvellous prophecy of this church age—"the things which are." (Here we find the Lord walking in the midst of His churches. Chap. 2. 1.)

From Chapter Four to the end of the book we have the prophecy of "the things which must be hereafter" (after these things, Chap. 1. 19).

John states that after the things related in chapters two and three, he looked and behold *a door was opened in heaven.* The Lord had said, "I am the Door," so this door was the Lord, and the voice which spake was also the Lord. The voice said, "Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (after these things), *i.e.,* after the fulfilment of the prophecies given in chapters two and three.

The opening words, "after these things," indicate a new beginning. The scene is now heaven, not earth.

Though not mentioned, *the Rapture of the Church* is viewed as having already taken place. The Lord was seen walking in the midst of the churches in the two

previous chapters (Chap. 2. 1); but now that the church has been caught up to be with the Lord in the air, the Lord is seen "in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones and in the midst of the elders" (including the church)—Chapter 5. 6. As Chapter 4 opens, the church is not seen on earth again in this book. It was a moral impossibility for John unaided to comprehend and grasp the wonders unfolded in the approaching prophecies, so as soon as he heard the voice, he says "immediately I was in spirit," which means that he was completely controlled by the Holy Spirit Himself.

He saw "a throne set in heaven" (v. 2). The word "set" (or "stood") speaks of the stability of God's throne in contrast with the instability of those on earth. The description of the One on the throne is given as "like unto a jasper and a sardine stone." These two stones were respectively the last and first on the High Priest's breastplate (Exod. 28. 17-20); but in the description of the new Jerusalem, these stones come first and sixth respectively. (The significance of the placing of these stones in such order will be considered when we come to Chapter 21.) The *Jasper stone* symbolizes the matchless glory of the One who sat on the Throne (see Chap. 21. 11), and as the *Sardine stone* is the only one which is blood-red of the twelve stones mentioned in both Exodus 28. 17-20 and Revelation 21. 19, 20, it symbolizes the redemptive character of our Blessed Lord. It is also instructive to note that Exod. 28. 21 states that twelve stones in the High Priest's breastplate were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes, according to their order: therefore, the name on the

"Sardine" was "Reuben" (meaning, "Behold, a son"); and on the "Jasper" was "Benjamin" (meaning, "Son of my right hand"). How prophetic of our Lord's incarnation and glorification! (See Gen. 29. 32; 35. 18.)

The *rainbow* speaks of the unchanging grace of God. In judgment He will remember mercy (Gen. 9. 13-17). "Like unto an emerald." This is the colour of nature (green) which never tires the eye. It is the rainbow which is green; so to look upon it as the evidence of God's grace during the pouring down of judgment upon the earth will be a constant joy to the beholder.

Those seated on the "twenty-four thrones" (not seats) in verse 4 represent the redeemed saints. The number "twenty-four" suggests the twenty-four orders or courses into which David divided the Priesthood (see 1 Chron., Chaps. 24 and 25). Here is a royal company with priestly prerogatives, for they sit on thrones, and are round about *the throne,* are clothed in the white garments of the priest, and wear crowns of gold. Without doubt the number twenty-four or twice twelve, symbolizes the Old Testament and New Testament saints, thus bringing out the teaching of Hebrews 11. 39-40, which emphasizes the retrospective as well as the prospective efficacy of the Cross. Here the saints are enthroned in glory with their Redeemer and Lord. No wonder they say, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth" (Chap. 5. 10). See comment on this verse.

"Out of the throne" (v. 5) (from God Himself) proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices (precursers of approaching judgments). "Seven lamps of fire" symbolize the perfection of the Spirit's govern-

mental action in harmony with the righteousness of His throne. He will make manifest all that is contrary to His holiness.

"A sea of glass like unto crystal" (v. 6). It will be remembered that both the Laver in the Tabernacle (Exod. 30. 18-21) and the Molten Sea in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7. 23-37) were for the purification of the priests, and were symbolic of the Word of God which is the Holy Spirit's instrument to keep the life and walk clean. Here the sea is of glass, not of water, for the cleansing of the saint is not needed after the church is home with the Lord (see Eph. 5. 26, 27). This sea being of glass symbolizes the fixed state of holiness and purity, while crystal (which is a natural product), symbolizes that this fixed state is in perfect harmony with the holy nature of God.

The Four Living Ones

Four living creatures (not beasts) (v. 6). Symbolic of the judicial attributes and authority of the One on the throne (read Isa. 6. 1-7). They are described as "full of eyes before and behind," which figure the fulness of spiritual intelligence. As four is the number of man and of creation, we see these four living ones associated in God's governmental and judicial dealings.

The four living creatures resemble both the cherubim and the seraphim. In verse 7 the cherubim are described, and in verse 8 the seraphim are portrayed. The action of the cherubim has to do with judgment—God's glory cannot be revealed without it; and that of the seraphim has to do with purification—God's holiness demands it.

The seraphim (Heb., "burners") are well typified in Isaiah 6. In verse 3, they cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." In verse 5, Isaiah realised his uncleanness. Then one of the seraphim touched his lips with a live coal from the altar, and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is purged (cleansed). Therefore the seraphim is connected with the brazen laver (place of cleansing), and is an angelic being.

The cherubim is first noted in Genesis 3. 24. After man's sin the cherubim with flaming sword guarded the way to the tree of life, but not before the seraphim had preceded this by the clothing of our first parents. The necessity for judgment must keep man *from* the tree of life; but when the Cross claimed its victim he had the right *to* the tree of life (Rev. 2. 7; 22. 14).

Ezekiel, Chap. 1, is illustrative of the cherubim which reveals the thought of judgment, and verse 28 shows that they have to do with God's glory. It is suggestive that the cherubim is connected with the brazen altar (place of judgment).

Revelation 4. 7, 8, therefore, typify the dual work of the Cross. God's judgment was borne for me, and I am cleansed through Him.

Those who refuse His cleansing—as symbolized by the work of the seraphim—must bear God's judgment, as typified by that of the cherubim. It also teaches us that God's holiness cannot condone sin in His children, but we must be continually cleansed by the Word (Psa. 119. 9; John 15. 3; Heb. 4. 12. See "The Judgment Seat of Christ").[6]

The association of the four living creatures in God's

governmental and judicial dealings is further symbolized by their appearance being described as like unto four beasts (v. 8). The first like a *lion*—speaks of God's omnipotence and majesty. The second like a *calf* (ox) symbolizes God's patience in work on behalf of men. The third had the *face of a man*—denotes God's intelligence. The fourth like a *flying eagle*—symbolizes two attributes: God's all-seeing eye and His rapidity of action.

How wonderfully do these four beasts compare with the four presentations of our Blessed Lord. Matthew reveals Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; Mark as the Servant (Ox); Luke as the Son of Man, shows His identification (though Himself sinless) with a fallen race. John, as Son of God is like the Eagle. He comes from heaven, and returns whence He came. In verse 9, the "living ones" announce glory, but the "elders" (saints) bow in worship.

The Lamb is not introduced until we come to Chapter 5, so the worship of verse 11 is to God for the glory and perfection of purpose as seen in His creation. They cast their crowns at His feet and state that He alone is worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power; for He alone had created all things, and for His pleasure alone they are and were created. What adoration and praise! So closes Chapter 4. The Lamb —the author of redemption—will soon take His place as the One who is worthy to reveal God's governmental and judicial dealings with men. The theme of Chapter 4 is the *Throne,* but that of Chapter 5 is the *Lamb.*

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER IV

72. **After These Things** (v. 1).—This or a similar phrase occurs eight times in Revelation.

This marks the beginning of the third division which was indicated in Chapter 1. 19. Each time this phrase or a similar one occurs it emphasizes important portions of this third division. These eight occurrences are Chapters 4. 1 (twice); 7. 1, 9; 15. 5; 18. 1; 19. 1; 20. 3.

73. **Door** (v. 1).—Christ, "I am the Door" (John 10. 9).

The Rapture has already taken place (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17).

74. **Opened** (v. 1).

Four occurrences in Revelation:

1. The **Door** in heaven **opens** to let the redeemed saints **in** (v. 1).
2. God's temple in heaven is **opened,** a sign that He is remembering His people Israel (Chap. 11. 19).
3. God's temple of the Tabernacle in heaven is **opened** to reveal the same as No. 2 (Chap. 15. 5).
4. Heaven is **opened,** symbolising the public manifestation of our Lord coming **out** for judgment (Chap. 19. 11).

75. **Twenty-four Elders** (v. 4).—The whole redeemed host from Abel to Pentecost.

76. **Seven Lamps of Fire** (v. 5).

A **Lamp** is used for searching things out. This is what the Spirit does, and He thus removes all contrary things.

Seven is the number of Spiritual perfection. On our quotation see comments on verse 5.

77. **First Like a Lion** (v. 7).—The majestic.

Shiloh (Christ) was to come from Judah who was designated "a lion's whelp," "as a lion," "as an old lion" (Gen. 49. 9-10). See Comments on verse 7.

78. **Second Like a Calf or Ox** (v. 7).—Patience (1 Cor. 9. 9). See Comments on verse 7.

79. **Third Has Face as a Man** (v. 7).—Intelligence. See Comments on verse 7.

80. **Fourth Like a Flying Eagle** (v. 7).—See Comments on v. 7. "As swift as an eagle flieth" (Deut. 28. 49) (Jer. 4. 13).

For symbols not mentioned in this list see comments on respective verses.

Chapter V

THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

JOHN states that he saw in the hands of God the Father, a seven-sealed book (or scroll). Note in whose hands the book was, for it contained the purposes of God in regard to this world, which prior to this were unrevealed mysteries.

The writer has in his possession an ancient and beautiful scroll of parchment, which helps one to understand Chapter 5. 1. Jewish books of antiquity were usually sheepskin scrolls.

In verse one of our chapter, we read that this scroll was sealed with seven seals. It does not mean that the seven seals covered the outside, but that a portion of the scroll was first written on and the scroll rolled up sufficiently to cover that portion, and then sealed. Another portion was written on, and that portion was rolled up and sealed, until the seven portions were so sealed. It will be seen that the seventh seal fastened the whole scroll, which became the first seal to be opened. The period covered by this scroll commences with the opening of the first seal, Chapter 6, and finishes with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Chapter 11. 18.

Seven is the number of perfection; therefore, this scroll contains the perfect purposes of God in regard to this world. Before these purposes could be revealed, the seals had to be broken.

A strong angel proclaimed with a loud voice to the uttermost bounds of God's universe, "Who is worthy

to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" And verse 3 declares, "No man in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." The seals on God's scroll of judgments cannot be broken by man. Man is not able even to look on this. Note the experience of Moses (Heb. 12. 18-21).

The Lamb Alone Worthy to Open the Book

John wept much because of this, and one of the Elders said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

The title, "Lion of the Tribe of Judah," takes our minds back to the words of Jacob's prophecy given on his death-bed. The lion is the king of all beasts, which emphasizes the supreme majesty of the Lord. Jacob said:

> "Judah is a lion's whelp . . . as an old lion who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until *Shiloh* come; and unto Him shall the gathering (*i.e.*, obedience) of the people be" (Gen. 49. 9, 10).

"Shiloh" means "Pacificator," which has reference to our Lord. He also will hold the title "The Root of David." The prophecy of Jacob, coupled with Isa. 11. 10—which is quoted in Rom. 15. 12—and our text (v. 5), shows that all power will be vested in Him (see John 5. 22); and as a lion He will overcome all opposing forces. He will be the conqueror of all nations, and the author of peace to His ancient people and to the world; for He will reign in majesty and power. (Read carefully Symbol 265.)

The Seer now beholds in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the

elders, not a Lion, but a Lamb. He is now the Lion of the Tribe of Judah because He is the Lamb that had been slain. Verse 9 emphasizes this.

Christ in His Resurrection Body

"A Lamb as it had been slain." Here is our blessed Lord in His resurrected body bearing the marks of Calvary's Cross. It was the same body which He showed to Thomas, when He said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing" (John 20. 27). Here in glory is the proof of Calvary; the proof of the bodily resurrection. No wonder that the Apostle Paul, referring to our Lord being risen from the dead, writes "this is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 8-9). The Apostle here points out that without the bodily resurrection there is no evidence that we have a Living Lord. His resurrection is a glorious proof of the completeness and sufficiency of the substitutionary work of Christ.

Our Lord Takes His Rightful Place

In verse 6, the number seven is given three times. We have previously noticed that "seven" is the number of perfection. "Horns" symbolize power and "eyes" symbolize intelligence. "The Seven Spirits of God" symbolize the perfection of the Holy Spirit's administration in government. Here the Lamb is about to assume the Government of the earth. He only does so as Redeemer, as the Lamb once slain. Satan, as usurper,

offered Him the possession of the world, but here He takes it because He had paid the price of sin on Calvary. The title-deeds are now His by right of redemption.

It is well again to note that while in Chapter 4 the main theme is the "Throne," in Chapter 5, it is the "Lamb."

How wonderfully descriptive is verse 7, "And He (the Lamb) came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." He now assumes His rightful place, claims the right to His inheritance. He claims His right to reign.

The Lamb the Centre of Worship

As soon as the Lamb takes the scroll out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before Him.

The living creatures and the elders worship the Lamb, but only the elders have harps and golden vials which are the prayers of saints. The living ones cannot sing the redemption song for themselves, for only the redeemed saints can so sing the song of Calvary, but the living ones do join in this glorious song of worship on behalf of the others.

The "harps" are a symbol of great joy, but the golden vials (bowls) speak of priestly service.

The "vials" were full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. The elders are not offering these prayers, as they are now with the Lord. These are the prayers of those faithful ones still on the earth who are feeling the tyranny and persecution of the Roman Prince and the Antichrist (see Chap. 13) during the

terrible tribulation which is then being endured. (See discussion on Chap. 8. 3.)

Heaven's New Song

In verse 9 we read, "and they sung a *new* song." There was no song in Genesis, for the fall in the Garden of Eden had taken place. The first song recorded is in Exodus, Chapter 15. The Children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt (a type of the world) and from Pharaoh (a type of Satan) by blood and by power. The blood of the Paschal Lamb had been shed, and they had been sheltered from the judgment by the sprinkling of the blood upon the lintel and the two sideposts of their houses (Chap. 12). In Chapter 15 the completion of this deliverance was experienced in their passing through the Red Sea, the overwhelming of the enemy and their safe arrival on the wilderness shores of the sea (a symbol of the resurrection). Now their deliverance was complete they could sing their glorious song of praise. This experience of the Children of Israel was a type of the experience of the glorified saints as related in Revelation 5. 9, 10. (Read 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2, 11.)

Verse 9 says that they sang a *new* song. Yes, the elders (redeemed host) could now see the wonder and completeness of their purchased redemption and so could sing to the Lamb who was the object of their praise. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests, and they shall reign on the earth."

The Worthiness of the Lamb Seen in His Redemptive Character

It is glorious to note that the worthiness of the Lamb is ascribed to Him because of His redemptive work. It was in His redemptive character alone that He was declared to be worthy to take the book and to loose its seals. The title-deeds of the world were now in His hands. The Cross had given place to the Crown. The efficacy of the Cross had made possible the Crown. The purchaser of redemption was about to become the revealer of judgment.

It will be noted that the above translation of verse 10 gives the pronouns "them" and "they," instead of "us" and "we." This is in harmony with the Greek and is of great importance.

The Living Ones join with the Elders in their great song of praise. The Living Ones sing of the redeemed host, of which they are not a part. The Elders sing of the whole of the redeemed, but especially of the redeemed ones who were then on the earth. Are they not priests unto God? This celebration is an unselfish act of the priestly service on behalf of others. Does not Chapter 7 speak of a great work of grace on earth which goes on between the rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4. 15-17) and the coming of the Lord *with* His saints in power and great glory (Luke 21. 27). It is of such a company that they sing. They can celebrate the work of grace already accomplished on earth, as well as the consummation of it in anticipation.

The chapter closes with the words, "The four living ones said, Amen, and the four and twenty elders fall down and worship" (literal translation).

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER V

81. **Sealed Book** (v. 1).—See comments on this chapter.

Compare with the sealed title deeds of Jeremiah, Chapter 32, which may at any time be unsealed by Archæologists.

Daniel was ordered by God to seal the scroll, and at the time of the end it was to be unsealed (Dan. 12. 4).

(For discussion of Jeremiah 32 and on Daniel 12. 4, see "The Remarkable Jew.")[1]

82. **Lion of the Tribe of Judah** (v. 5).—Prophesied in Genesis 49. 9-10. (See Comments on verse 5.)

83. **Root of David** (v. 5).—See Isaiah 11. 10; Romans 15. 12, Chapter 22. 16. (See Discussion on Chap. 22. 16.)

84. **Harps** (v. 8).—See Symbol 178.

85. **Odours** (v. 8).—Incenses, the plural here has reference to the combined perfumes of which the incense was composed, suggesting the moral beauties of our Lord.

86. **Golden Vials** (v. 8).—Bowls, see Symbol 195.

Chapter VI

THE OPENING OF THE SIX SEALS

WE must note that we have three symbols used under which judgments are revealed, as W. Scott has well stated, "The judgments under the Seals and Trumpets are not contemporaneous, but successive. The former cover a larger area than the trumpets, but these latter, on the other hand, are more severe and searching in character. The Lamb is connected with the Seals, the angels with the Trumpets, and God with the Vials or Bowls of wrath."

The revelations given under the first four seals are the simplest to understand.

We have already pointed out that the church period on earth is over, and that she has been caught up to be with the Lord before Chapter 4 opens. The scenes in Chapters 4 and 5 are in heaven; and the Lamb is shown to be worthy to open God's seven-sealed scroll.

In Chapter 6, the Lamb breaks the first seal, and a living creature speaks as in the voice of thunder. This means that something of importance is to be revealed —*"Prophecy now begins,"* and the purposes of God concerning the world are being prophetically told. This chapter unveils the first of the series of judgments which are to take place on earth subsequent to the calling up of the church.

Horses are also used figuratively in Zechariah 1 and 6. In the latter chapter they *do not* visualize the four

world empires of Daniel 2 and 7; but in Revelation 6 they *are* prophetic of the final phase of world-dominion by man, prior to the millennial reign of Christ.

To further amplify, we must note that the expression, "The four spirits of the heavens" in Zech. 6. 5, clearly shows that the horses symbolize the divine power (these are angels and can well be identified with those in Rev. 7. 1-3) in judgment upon world empires; but in Revelation 6 the horses are prophetic of the human instruments used in God's providential judgments on the earth in the final phase of man's domination.

First Seal Opened—A White Horse (v. 2)

One of the four living creatures said, "Come," and John states, "I saw, and behold a White Horse." The White Horse symbolizes a bloodless victory. This rider on the white horse must not be confused with Him of Chapter 19. 11, whose name is "Faithful and True." This rider is not the Lord and not the Antichrist, but the Head of the Revived Roman Empire which may be developed remarkably at any time. (See "Resurrection of Old Roman Empire." [2]) He is the same one who is referred to under the name "Little Horn" in Daniel 7. 8, 20, 24ff. He is also the first beast of Revelation 13. 1-10. Daniel 2 shows that this fourth empire of Rome will reappear and it will come in its new Imperial form when chaotic conditions are prevalent on the earth.

As a leader—another Napoleon—he will take advantage of the utter chaos which will be, to a great extent, the result of the sudden rapture of the Church to be with her Lord in glory—which, as we have seen, takes

place between the third and fourth chapters of our book. It is interesting to read in verse 2 that "a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." This clearly shows that he was crowned first. He is put into his place as acknowledged head of this resurrected Empire; then he begins a series of successive and bloodless conquests. The symbol *bow* denotes that this warfare is not a hand to hand struggle. Man is making great efforts to bring in a rule of peace and order apart from the Prince of Peace, and the opening of the first seal reveals man's last effort to bring about such a result.

We should again note that the words, "I heard, as it were the noise of thunder" (v. 1) tell of a coming storm. What more significant symbol could be used of the storms that will come on the earth as God's judgments are revealed.

Second Seal Opened—Red Horse (v. 4)

Verse 4 states: "There went out another horse that was red: and power was given him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and . . . there was given unto him a great sword." This verse is self-explanatory. The White Horse symbolizes bloodless victories, the Red Horse speaks of slaughter and bloodshed.

"Power was given unto him," that is, God gave him power to bring sorrow and distress upon man because of his sin. The wickedness of men has been so great that God allows a leader among them to carry out His judgment upon them. "Kill one another" is but a phrase that means revolution. Even the civil authorities are powerless to stop this internal strife. "A great

sword" symbolizes the awfulness of the bloodshed. It is a terrible picture of what the earth is to pass through after the church has been taken home to be with her Lord.

Third Seal Opened—A Black Horse (v. 5)

As we have noted terrible anarchy follows the peaceful conquest of the Roman Prince. During such periods, agricultural requirements are usually neglected, and famine ensues. A picture of this is given in verses 5, 6.

"Black" is an Old Testament description of one of the results of famine. (See Lamentations 4. 8; 5. 10.) How dark the picture is.

A measure—about one quart—of wheat will be sold for a penny (a denarius), also three measures of barley at the same price. A *denarius* was the daily wage of a labourer and of a Roman soldier. One quart of wheat, or three quarts of barley, which is only about enough to sustain life for one day, is sold for one day's wage. A *denarius* is equal to eightpence (sixteen cents).

The main staff of life is sold at famine price: but the tragic statement is seen in the sentence: "hurt not the oil and the wine."

The oil and wine are the food of the rich, who at this stage are protected. Their sorrows are to come later, for they will not be left to escape unjudged or unpunished (see v. 15).

The first who suffer in a revolution are the common rank and file, while those in affluent circumstances are the last to feel the privation. It is this fact which is before us in these verses.

Fourth Seal Opened—A Pale Horse (v. 8)

Just as famine follows anarchy and strife, so death follows famine.

Thus the fourth seal being opened, John saw "a Pale Horse." One that looked like a corpse of cadaverous hue—a figure of death.

The first three horsemen of this chapter are unnamed, but this one's name is given as "Death," and his inseparable companion "Hell" followed with him. Death comes on living men, but Hell (Hades) claims dead men's souls. In the final judgment their lot is the Lake of Fire (see Rev. 20. 13, 14). Power is given them over the "fourth part of the earth," this showing that the scope of the judgment is limited. But this portion of the earth suffered a fourfold judgment.

This horseman and his companion are: (1) to kill with the sword; (2) with hunger; (3) with death; (4) and with the beasts of the earth. Terrible these judgments will be.

It may be remarked in passing that the four living creatures, each in his turn, called John to witness the opening of the seals.

Fifth Seal Opened—The Jewish Martyrs (vv. 9-11)

The fifth seal being opened John saw "under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held."

Who were these martyred ones? Not any of the church, because they all are already with the Lord in the glory. The redeemed host in glory have already received their resurrection or glorified bodies.

Verse 10 shows that these martyrs ask for judgment and vengeance. Now that is a purely Jewish attitude, and is in harmony with the imprecatory Psalms. (The Church's ideal attitude is more like, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."). These Jews are slain before the "Great Tribulation" commences; half of the tribulation of seven years having already gone.

Verse 11 states that a "white robe" was given to each one, which indicates their righteousness (see Chap. 19. 8), and that God accepts their attitude and stamps His approval upon it.

They are told also that more of their fellow-servants (Jewish brethren) were to be slain for their faith, which will occur during the great tribulation. Our Lord prophesied this persecution in Matthew 24. 9-14. The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom would be the cause of Gentile opposition. We are to-day declaring the Gospel of the Grace of God. After the church is taken up, the message of the believing Jews will be that Christ is coming to set up His kingdom: and because of this, power-loving Gentiles will hate, persecute, and kill them. Scripture very clearly prophesies that the persecution of God's earthly people is to be carried on with terrific severity by the first beast of Revelation 13. But when this prophecy has been fulfilled, and this lawless one has finished his course, then God's answer comes with overwhelming suddenness; as 2 Thessalonians 2. 8 says: "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (see also Chap. 19. 20).

These passages declare the time and severity of God's

complete answer to the prayer of this martyred remnant of our chapter.

The Sixth Seal Opened—Apostasy and Its Result (vv. 12-17)

Though the full response to the prayer of the martyred remnant will not be possible until the end of the great tribulation period, the Lord begins His judicial judgments under the period covered by the sixth seal. During this time we find that there will be a complete civil governmental and moral collapse—an awful picture of the terrible results of apostasy.

Verses 12-14 contain symbols all of which are from nature, or from the powers of nature. "A great earthquake," this may be looked upon as either literal or symbolic. The Lord forewarned that earthquakes would take place as signs of the end (Matt. 24. 7), but these two verses must be examined chiefly in their symbolic significance.

As thunder is the sound of a coming storm, so this expression "a great earthquake" symbolizes the approaching upheaval of social, ecclesiastical, and political authority.

"The Sun" represents complete authority of government; "The Moon," all dependent authorities.

As the moon is dependent upon the sun for light, so these lesser authorities are dependent upon supreme authorities for their power.

"The Stars" mean the still lesser authorities.

"The Heaven and every mountain and island" describe the collapse of the moral universe.

The whole structure of society falls, and with it all

stable government (mountain) and all commerce and industry (islands) are wiped out.

Verse 15 prophesies the effect this calamity will have upon the dwellers on earth. From kings to bondmen terror strikes their hearts. They see the effect of the world's apostasy. They hide themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains. The "mountains" in verses 15-16 are literal, evidently because men hide "in the rocks of the mountains" and pray that they may fall on them. This proves that the word "mountain" in verse 14 must be figurative. It is sad to note that those mentioned in verse 15 do not pray to God, but call on the mountains. They are in terror because they can now see that it is the hand of God Himself, and are now well aware that all the outpourings of judgment, of which they were warned, are certain of fulfilment, although they have yet to learn that this is but the beginning of them.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION is about to commence. The scenes described previously in this chapter only refer to the first part of Daniel's seventieth week. What must the sorrows be like during the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation. The opening of that period will be seen when we come to Chapter 8.

We are persuaded that the present tragic condition of the world shows that all is rapidly heading up to make possible the prophetic picture which is described in our chapter. Irreligious men are becoming so God-defying; while professedly religious men are denying every fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith so blatantly, that we wonder at the patience and longsuffering of our God. The world is fast ripening for judg-

ment; clearly, "We can see the day approaching." Everything seems to indicate that the time of our departure is near at hand; when we shall meet our blessed Lord in the air. When that event has taken place, the judgments revealed in this chapter will soon be carried out on earth. Men who have refused to believe in the Book of Revelation will behold its confirmation when it is too late. Some expositors think that Chapter 6 presents to view judgments from the time of the rapture of the church to the completion of the great tribulation period, and that the judgments under the sixth seal bring us to the era of the personal coming to the earth of the Son of Man in judgment. But while it is perfectly true that some details of the events which take place under the six seals will be repeated during the Great Tribulation period; we should note that verses 16 and 17 give us the statements of terrified men who are experiencing something of the wrath of God. That does not mean, however, that the final day has come. These are but the beginning of sorrows.

Again, we must note that the judgments under the seven seals are not contemporaneous, but progressive and chronological, therefore, the opening of the seventh seal, commencing in Chapter 8, must follow the opening of the sixth seal in Chapter 6.

The judgments revealed during the opening of the six seals will not end before the opening of the seventh seal; but will be increased in intensity until the Lord Himself appears in glory.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER VI

87. **Horses** (vv. 1, 4, 5, 8).—See figures used in Zechariah 6. 2-7, which verses state are the four spirits of the heavens. These are symbolical of God's power in judgment upon world nations. Zech. 6. 5 suggests that they are angels (see comments on verse 2); while those in Revelation 6 are human agencies God uses in judgment.

88. **White** (v. 2).—Bloodless conquest.

89. **Red** (v. 4).—Symbol of blood (see Isaiah 62. 2, 3).
On symbols of horses in our chapter see comments already given.

90. **Black** (v. 5).—One of the terrible results of famine.
Compare Lamentations 4. 8; 5. 10; Jeremiah 4. 28.

91. **Balances** (v. 5).—Exact weight.
Compare Ezekiel 4. 7-17, especially verses 7, 10, 11, 16, 17. The prophet in this chapter vividly describes famine during the coming siege of Jerusalem, which strikingly illustrates verses 4 and 5 of our chapter.

92. **Under the Altar** (v. 9).—Where the blood was poured out.
Though the remarkable expression is a figurative one, it is clearly indicative of the fact that this sacrifice was completed.

93. **Slain** (v. 9).—A sacrificial word peculiarly adapted to describe Jewish martyrs.

94. **As Blood** (v. 12).—Symbolizes moral death. Result of apostasy. (See Symbol 110.)

95. **The Sixth Seal Judgments.**
The scenes under this seal are very impressive. If we compare Isaiah 24. 16-23; Joel 2. 30, 31; Zephaniah 1. 13-15 and Matthew 24. 29, 30, we will be convinced that the sixth seal judgments anticipate the completion of the day of the Lord, yet they are stated to be but the beginning of sorrows.
We must specially compare Isaiah 34. 4 with verse 13.

96. **Mountain** (v. 14). Often symbolic of a kingdom. Jer. 51. 25 gives the Lord's word where He twice describes Babylon as a mountain. Christ's Millennial Reign is also symbolized as a mountain in Isa. 2. 2; Dan. 2. 35, 44.

Chapter VII

A PARENTHESIS OF GRACE

TURNING to this chapter we will see that the contents of it do not come under the sixth seal. The revelation of judgments under the first six seals are related in Chapter 6, and those connected with the opening of the seventh seal in Chapter 8. Why then is this chapter given when it is not strictly chronological? The answer is simple. In judgment God remembers mercy. He breaks off the revelation of His judgments in order to reveal the glorious fact that during the period of wrath upon believers, there will be at the same time an outpouring of grace upon believers, both Jews and Gentiles alike. This chapter is therefore a parenthetical one, but the time covered by it is clearly revealed in its contents; for Chapter 6 ends before the Great Tribulation begins, and Chapter 7 chronologically follows on. But we may observe that while the 144,000 of Israel are sealed before that terrible time, the Gentile believers are saved during it.

As we intimate at the beginning of Chapter 4 that the words "after this" or "after these things" indicate a new beginning: so we find the same introduction twice given in this chapter. These words in verse 1, indicate the first portion of the chapter which deals with Israel: while the same words in verse 9 introduce that part containing the prophecy of the Gentile nations.

The Four Restraining Angels (vv. 1-3)

"Four winds of earth." Though in Dan. 7. 2 this expression speaks of the four world empires; without doubt the very thought of wind suggests disturbing elements. As these winds are held for a period (v. 1), they symbolize political disturbances which God can control, or free, in judgment.

The chapter opens with an account of "four angels" who restrain the judgment from coming on the earth (settled government), on the sea (unsettled condition, chaos), or any tree (pride of man) until the Lord has sealed (sign of ownership) the servants (bondmen) of our God on their foreheads.

This refers to the Jewish remnant whom the Lord will preserve from the martyrdom which will be the lot of other believers.

"Sealed in their foreheads" is a public evidence of ownership.

144,000 Sealed

The number sealed was 144,000 of all Israel. Not one Gentile is included. Twelve thousand out of each tribe. Twelve is Israel's number. There were twelve tribes, twelve stones in the High Priest's breastplate, twelve loaves of presentation, etc. (see "Significance of Numbers"). "Israel" is the name used for the twelve tribes in this chapter of which "Judah" is the first mentioned. The 144,000 implies a fixed and limited number.

DAN is not referred to in the list of the tribes; probably because they so early went into idolatry. So did Ephraim, but as Joseph is mentioned he stands for that tribe. How true is the Word of the Lord as seen in

Deuteronomy 29. 18-20, when He said that He would blot out the name of the idolator. Yet how wonderfully His grace is seen in the names of those who are to have a portion of the land in the final restoration, for both Dan and Ephraim are given their portion, in spite of their previous idolatry (Ezek. 48. 1, 5). This reference from Ezekiel and other Old Testament passages clearly indicate that though these two tribes already referred to had been guilty of the grossest idolatry and thereby merited God's severest judgment, yet the latter days will witness real repentance on their part resulting in a glorious manifestation of God's abundant grace and forgiveness.

The fulfilment of Romans 11. 26 will no doubt include them.

Great Multitude Saved—Gentiles (vv. 9-17)

There has been much controversy concerning the following questions:

(1) Will the whole heathen world be damned because the church has been caught up to be with the Lord in the air, and the dispensation of God's unlimited grace has closed?

(2) Will any be saved on earth after the church is taken up?

(3) If the Holy Spirit goes with the church, how can any work of the Spirit be carried on among the people of the earth? We will endeavour to answer these questions as we proceed to unfold the truths contained in this chapter.

The 144,000 of Israel are sealed by God as His own, and also that a vast multitude of Gentiles out of all nations are saved (all of which takes place after the

rapture of the church), is clearly taught in this passage.

Let us now examine verses 9-17. John says:

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

It has often been stated that the church is here described, but this is not so. The church has already been raptured and is in heavenly glory, while this is an earthly millennial scene, as verses 15-17 clearly show.

The expression "before the throne" in verse 15, is in contrast to the heavenly multitude who stand "around the throne" (v. 11). The latter are in heaven, while the former are before the millennial throne on earth. We read in Hebrews 4. 16: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." It does not mean that we must be in heaven before we can come unto the throne of grace; so the words "before the throne" convey the beautiful thought that this great Gentile company has a closeness of access to God.

These Come Out of the Great Tribulation

Verse 14 distinctly shows this. "These are they that come out of *the Great Tribulation*" (literal rendering), and the church is to be caught up to be with her Lord prior to that terrible time which is to try all them that dwell upon the earth.

This great multitude "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v. 14), plainly indicating that a marvellous work of grace will be carried on in the earth after the church has been taken away.

"The white robes" symbolize the righteousness of Christ—made white in the blood of the Lamb. A difference may be observed here; for verse 9 says that this white-robed throng have palms in their hands. (This is the only place in Revelation where palms are mentioned.) The redeemed host in heaven (Chap. 4. 4) also had white robes, but they were crowned, and did not have palms. The Gentile company in Chapter 7 have palms, but are not crowned.

Significance of Palms

"Palms" is to express joy. What is the source of their joy? Have they not gone through the sorrows of the Great Tribulation? Is not their deliverance now complete? Yes, hence they have palms of victory in their hands. They are celebrating with joy their complete deliverance by the blood of the Lamb. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated as a sign of joy for perfect emancipation from Egypt (Lev. 23. 43); during this feast they had to take branches of palm trees (v. 40).

When the Lord rode upon the ass into Jerusalem in fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, "the people took branches of palm trees." It was a joyous occasion, and they saw in it the sign of complete deliverance; for they cried: "Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." It is true that their minds may have dwelt upon deliverance from the Romans, yet joy was definitely expressed.

It is also interesting to note that in the millennial temple—commonly called Ezekiel's temple (Ezek. 40 and 41)—the only wood used in its building is that of

the palm tree, which is mentioned at least ten times in the two chapters. The millennial temple will be truly a proof of complete deliverance. So the great Gentile host in Revelation 7 are seen to be completely delivered (vv. 15-17). No wonder that after this marvellous emancipation the chapter should end with the words: "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Oh what gladness! Their tears are never to flow again.

The expression, "neither shall the sun light upon them nor any heat" (lit. rend.: "He . . . shall spread His tabernacle over them") (v. 16), brings to our minds the glorious prophecy of Isaiah 4. 5, 6, which closes with the word "there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm and rain."

This glorious protection is well typified in the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night during the wilderness journeyings of the Children of Israel. (See Exod. 13. 21, 22.)

In the description of the New Jerusalem (heavenly) in Chapter 21 we see two striking contrasts to the earthly blessings of Chapter 7. 15-17.

In Chapter 7—"They serve Him *day and night.*"
In Chapter 21—"There shall be *no night there.*"
In Chapter 7—"They serve in *His Temple.*"
In Chapter 21—"I saw *no temple* therein."

Considering Difficulties Raised

In the consideration of this chapter we have already shown that vast multitudes come into blessing. These will be chiefly those who are living on the earth, but who have never heard the Gospel when Christ calls His

church away, and who will accept Him as their Saviour and Lord after that event.

The church age has closed, but the seed sown during this dispensation will bring an abundant reaping during the tribulation period. Has not the Lord said that "My Word . . . shall not return unto Me void?" (Isa. 55. 11). Praise His Name, much sowing now will see much reaping then.

In the Old Testament times the Holy Spirit operated from heaven and *came on* individuals. They were chosen to do special work for God. At Pentecost this was different. A special gift to the church took place then, in that the Holy Spirit came *to indwell* believers, for did not our Lord say: "He dwelleth with you (Himself) and shall be *in* you." Now when the Holy Spirit goes with the church He leaves the earth as to His personal presence here, but He will operate from heaven and carry out a marvellous work of grace upon earth. But let the reader remember that though it is true that multitudes will be saved during the period of the great tribulation on the earth; 2 Thessalonians 2. 8-12 solemnly declares that the rejecters of Christ in this present day of grace have no promise whatever of salvation in that day of sorrow and judgment.

One needs to make sure that he is an accepter of Christ before that day of darkness and doom approaches.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER VII

97. **Four Winds** (v. 1).—This same term is used by Daniel in Chapter 7. 2 to represent the four World Powers. No doubt that the last of these powers (head of revived Roman Empire) will be restrained until the servants of God are sealed. There will be centred in him the infamy of the three that preceded him (see comments on Chapter 13. 2).

98. **Sealed in their Foreheads** (v. 3).—A public evidence of ownership. In this verse it is also a sign of preservation. (See 2 Tim. 2. 19). (See the contrast in Chapter 13. 16).

99. **Nations and Kindreds and Peoples and Tongues** (v. 9). Note the four words used. This is an expression often given in Revelation.
    Four is the world number.
    (See comments on this verse and significance of numbers.)

100. **White Robes** (v. 9).—See Symbol 54 and comments on verse.

101. **Palms in Their Hands** (v. 9).—See comments on verse, and chapter on the "Significance of Numbers."

102. **Temple** (v. 15).—The Millennial Temple — Therefore on Earth. (See comments on verses.)

103. **Lead Them to Fountains** (v. 17).—The picture of the Good Shepherd leading His flock (Isa. 40. 11; John 10. 16). A beautiful Millennial scene. He will lead them to the fountains (the very sources) of "the waters of life" (lit. rend.).

Chapter VIII

THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL

THE last seal of the scroll is now open. The final judgments are to be poured out, and as a solemn sign of the awful nature of the coming storm there is silence in heaven for a very brief space—signified by the term "half an hour."

Under this seventh seal the rest of the judgments are revealed.

John says:

"I saw the seven angels which stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets."

Trumpets were constantly used by Israel on all national occasions—for war, for convening, and so forth. In our chapter they symbolize a public announcement of judgment, seven trumpets signifying completeness of announcement.

Under the trumpets the judgments are much more severe than those under the seals.

The Angel Priest (v. 3)

Before the first angel sounds his trumpet we have a striking prelude (vv. 3-6).

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him *much incense,* that he might give *efficacy* to the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" (lit. trans.) (v. 3).

It has been thought by some that this is a created angel. But is a created angel ever spoken of as a priest? Surely this is none other than the Lord Jesus acting as

the High Priest. A mere angel has nothing to do with our prayers, but our blessed Lord has.

THE INCENSE has been said by some to represent our prayers, but this verse shows that it is not so, though one's prayers on earth is incense before God in heaven. The incense is offered *with* the prayers: making plain that though there is some connection between them they are not the same thing.

The Incense represents the merits of Christ, by which alone are our prayers efficacious and acceptable to God.

In the Tabernacle worship the odour of the incense ascended to the Lord, but the incense was burned on the coals which had consumed the sacrifice on the brazen altar. This altar typifies the Cross. In verse 3 we see the glorious truth revealed that it needed the fire of Calvary before the incense (the merits of Christ) could send its sweet fragrance up to God, and so make the prayers of God's people efficacious. We pray in the name, or on the authority of, our Lord Jesus because He met our need on Calvary's Cross.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10. 19) we can draw near.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 25).

The incense is not offered for the church; they are in glory. It is not offered for the dead, that would not be efficacious. It is for the saints who are then living on the earth. Such prayer (in perfect harmony with that dispensational period) will be for deliverance from and for judgment upon their persecuting enemies. The prayers of God's suffering saints cannot long be left unanswered.

The smoke of the incense came with the prayers of the saints and ascended up to God, not out of the censer, but out of the angel's hand (v. 4). How intimate is His connection with His saints on earth.

THE CENSER is a symbol of grace. He now takes that censer (v. 5) and fills it with fire from the altar—which is a symbol of judgment—and casts it upon the earth: And there are "voices and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The High Priest becomes the pourer out of judgment; the Saviour becomes the Judge. The very merits of Christ which have been denied by an apostate world and the trampling under foot of the blood of Christ become the reason for the pouring out of God's wrath upon the guilty world.

No sooner is this done by our Lord than the seven angels begin to sound. The thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake (v. 5) are prior warnings of God's judicial dealings, demonstrating His power in judgment; while the "Voices" represent God intelligently directing such judgments.

Signs were present when the law was given (Exod. 19. 16). Psalm 29. 3-5 read in this connection is also illuminating.

The Sounding of the First Trumpet (v. 7)

We have already noted the peculiar severity of judgments under the trumpets. They declare that God is dealing judicially in judgment, and in a public manner. When the first ángel sounded "there followed hail and fire mingled with blood." All these represent various aspects of God's judgment. "Hail" speaks of the source

(from above) and of the suddenness of it (Isa. 28. 2); "fire" is symbolic of its consuming character; and "blood" is descriptive of death—here not only physical, but moral also. These expressions of His wrath were "cast upon the earth." "Earth" symbolizes orderly government, and "sea" (v. 8) chaotic conditions among nations.

The next clause (correctly put in the revised version), throws much light on the scene of this judgment.

"And the third part of the earth was burnt up" (v. 7). "The third part of the earth" is an expression used to symbolize the Roman Empire for it is the chief seat of the dragon's rule.

And "The third part of the trees were burnt up and all green grass" (v. 7). Trees and grass represent men. The former representing the proud especially.

The Sounding of the Second Trumpet (vv. 8, 9)

When the second angel sounded,

> "As it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

In the Old Testament, a mountain often represents a kingdom; (in Dan. 2. 35 the millennial reign of Christ is symbolized by a mountain).

As one has truly said: *"The earth* symbolises the Roman Empire in general while *the third part of the earth* refers to the western part of this prophetic earth."

This western portion is the chief seat of the Dragon's rule, where the two supermen hold sway under his authority. In other words, it is the heart of all the blasphemy and infamy the world has ever known; for

the hub of its greatest persecuting power is in Palestine. This accounts for God's judgments being centered here.

In Jeremiah 51. 25, Babylon is called a destroying mountain, and the Lord prophesies that He will make it a burnt mountain—that which has been burnt by the fire of God's wrath.

The expression, "the third part of the sea," reminds us of Chapter 12. 3-4, in which the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his "heads," is the great controller of the Roman Empire's ruler. Of him it is said that "his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." It is therefore not surprising, that the apostasy of that Empire is so diabolically corrupt, seeing that the dragon is actually in control.

The term, "a great mountain burning with fire," in verse 8, is descriptive of some prominent (and established) Kingdom being the object of God's immediate visiting judgment. This Kingdom, the revived Roman Empire, already burning with a revolutionary spirit, is cast among the nations which are outside the Roman Empire and who are already in a state of turmoil. The result of this being awful destruction of life in those countries which are in a state of unrest (in the sea) and which have connections with the Roman Empire. Also their means of commerce is destroyed.

Any nation which has an alliance or close contact, with the apostate Roman Power must suffer the terrible judgments of God.

The Sounding of the Third Trumpet (vv. 10, 11)

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell *a great star* from the heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a third part

of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

The star that falls is thought by some to be the Antichrist; but we must not confuse this one with the star referred to in Chap. 9. 1. Whoever he may be, he certainly falls from the heaven (the moral heavens). This star falls from *the heaven* (lit. rend.), which means "the source of authority." He is one who is responsible to give help in the world's great need, but because of his apostasy he comes under God's judgment.

"Burning as it were a lamp," certainly indicates an apostate. "Lamp" is symbolic of profession. So this person must be an apostate of high rank and prestige; but because he is a "star," he is subordinate to another person, or power.

His fall brings moral chaos. His very name "Wormwood," speaks of moral poison and corrupting apostasy.

Through this fall the life of the nation is morally poisoned, and many die in result. We have already pointed out that the *third part* refers to the revived Roman Empire (confirmation of this is seen in Chapter 12. 3, 4); therefore a "great star" is a great apostate ruler in that empire. It can readily be seen, I believe, that the judgment in this chapter comes on apostate Gentiles.

The Sounding of the Fourth Trumpet (vv. 12, 13)

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not appear for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

"And I beheld, and heard an eagle flying in mid heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to them that dwell upon the earth, for the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (vv. 12, 13, literal translation).

The fact that the term "the third part" is used five times in this verse is significant. The whole of these judgments under the fourth trumpet have to do alone with the Roman Empire and it describes an awful crash.

"The Sun" (supreme authority), which is the resurrected Empire of Rome, is smitten. "The moon" (those deriving their authority from such), and "the stars" (still lesser authorities), are also smitten. All those in authority fall, and all semblance of power in the Empire crashes. The scene is like an awful nightmare. The whole of the moral heavens collapse; the revolution turns day into night. What a terrible prophecy this is, but verse 13 shows that this is comparatively little to the judgments that will fall under the three last trumpets.

Let us repeat the awful and ominous words uttered by the flying eagle: "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the *three* angels, which are yet to sound" (v. 12).

One can see that in verse 12, the woes have to do with the last three trumpets. The first four described in verses 7 to 12, are not as severe as the other three. It will be correct to name the last three trumpets, the "woe" trumpets: for it is observed that the word "woe" is announced before each one of these (see 8. 13; 9. 12; 11. 14). The word "woe" symbolizes the severity of the judgment and their terrifying effect.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER VIII

104. **Another Angel** (v. 3).—The Lord as the Angel-Priest.

Compare Zechariah 3. 1-7 where the Lord appears as the angel-advocate. The Lord appeared as an angel to the Patriarchs and to others in the Old Testament. A notable instance is given in Genesis 22. 15, 16 where we read: "The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven and said, By Myself have I sworn saith the Lord." This becomes clearer to us when we remember that the word "Angel" means Messenger.

105. **Altar** (v. 3).—There are **two altars** spoken of here because there were two altars in the Temple. The Brazen Altar (upon which the sacrifices were offered and which made prayers efficacious), and the altar before the Vail upon which the incense was burned. Our Lord stands at the Brazen Altar which typified Calvary and offered the incense (His merits) upon the Golden Altar.

106. **Golden Censer** (v. 3).—Only used elsewhere in Hebrews 9. 4. **Gold** represents righteousness (see comments on verse).

107. **Cast it** (v. 5).—Hurled it. This indicates God's great indignation against man's sin.

108. **Voices, Thunderings, Lightnings, Earthquake** (v. 5).

A demonstration of God's power in judgment; and a warning that His judicial dealings are about to begin.

Four is the world number and of universality.

(See significance of numbers.)

109. **Fire** (v. 7).—See Symbol 11 (3).

110. **Blood** (v. 7).—Physical and moral death. The moral describes the awful results of complete apostasy. God's devastating judgment is seen in that hail and fire (God's destroying vengeance) is mingled with blood.

111. **Mountain Burning with Fire** (v. 8).

This represents a kingdom (Isa. 2. 2 and Jer. 51. 25).

The latter Scripture designates the old Babylonian Kingdom as a destroying mountain, which the Lord will make a burnt mountain (Kingdom).

112. **Angel** (Eagle) (v. 13).—This word should be translated "eagle," not angel. It symbolizes the swiftness with which this judgment is coming.

113. **Heaven** (v. 10).—Source of authority. (See discussion on verse).

114. **Inhabiters of Earth** (v. 13).—Those who make the earth the centre of their affections. This has a moral application. (See Symbol 33.)

Chapter IX

THE SOUNDING OF THE FIFTH TRUMPET

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star out of the heaven fallen to the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit (abyss). And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (vv. 1, 2, literal rendering).

IT must be noted that the literal rendering in verse 1 is slightly different from the authorized version. The verb "fall" is changed into the past tense "fallen." This change can be seen in nearly all Bible margins, and is a correct translation of the Greek. John did not see this star fall; but he saw it after the fall had taken place.

Who is the Fallen Star?

There are many conjectures as to who this individual is who falls from heaven, that is, from the moral heaven.

Some would identify him with Satan, for Isaiah speaks of Satan (Lucifer) having fallen from heaven (Isa. 14. 12), also our Lord Himself describing Satan's fall at another period, saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10. 12).

That Satan is a great apostate has been known from the Word of God all down the centuries. But the "fallen star" in Chapter 9 is a new revelation, and I have no doubt that he is the "Antichrist."

Neither the statement of Isaiah, nor the prophecy of our Lord are referred to in Revelation 9. 1. It is the Antichrist himself who is described.

When we come to Revelation 13 we will see that the first beast (the Roman Prince) is energized by Satan for his temporal power; while the second beast (the Antichrist or False Prophet) is energized by Satan to support his religious pretensions.

"The Fallen Star" of our chapter is given authority to open the abyss, which is the prison house of demons. This is strongly suggested in Luke 8. 31. "The demons besought Him that He would not send them into the deep (abyss)." This is the place where Satan will be bound 1000 years (20. 3), and out of which the Beast appears (11. 7). It is also where the spirits of the disobedient are confined in prison (see 1 Pet. 2. 4); and the place in which angels who sinned are delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2. 4).

When we come to verse 11 we will see that Satan is there described, for his name is given. "The Star" is another personage whom he energizes. Who but the Antichrist is the great religious head, who compels worship of the first beast (Rev. 13. 14, 15).

Apostasy and Its Certain Results

When the abyss is opened, moral darkness—as symbolized by the smoke—issues forth, and fearful agencies of the Devil (as symbolized by locusts) come out of the pit (vv. 2, 3). The apostate has been given permission to let loose the awful power of demons. The darkness of the pit now completely clouds men's minds, permeating them with the most horrible doctrines. This gives a vivid prophetic picture of the terrible results of apostasy from God.

Is it not startling to see how rapidly men and women are being led away from the Word of God by false cults to-day? Nearly all the leaders of them say that they have *the key* to, or new light upon, the Scriptures.

Among these we may mention Russell of Millennial Dawnism, who claimed that he alone had the light of Scripture; Christian Science, whose chief book is called "Key to the Scriptures"; Theosophy, whose emblem is a snake and a key; and the "Unity" movement which is described by a Christian Science leader as a split from that cult; certainly "Unity" is almost its twin sister, but in a new cloak.

The first woe under this fifth trumpet describes the certain result from the propagation of these heresies. The delusion is becoming world-wide, and coupled with unblushing Modernism, is rapidly sweeping millions into perdition.

Apostate Israel

The power of these locusts suggests supernatural judgment.

"The grass," "green things," and "trees" symbolize men in more or less prosperous circumstances; this is clearly proven by the word "men" used in this verse (v. 4). The latter clause of it showing that reference is made to apostate Israel, "only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (v. 4), while Chapter 8, and Chapter 9. 13-21, describe judgments upon apostate Gentiles.

As the Gentile multitude in Chapter 7 were not sealed, the expression "only those men," could not apply to them; it must definitely apply to the Israelites who were not included in Chapter 7. 4.

The account of the sealing of the faithful remnant is given in Chapter 7. 3; and the confirmation of God's protection is in the verse we are now considering (v. 4).

This awful judgment will be for a limited time only, as suggested by the term "five months."

As this period is the length of a locust's life, the expression "five months" may be accepted as symbolic —though not necessarily so; yet it does mean a definitely determined and brief space of time. And it is certainly a scene of awful terror. Even death will be denied them.

Men may utterly disregard death to-day, may laugh at the very thought of it, but in that day they will long for death as a relief from torment; but death will flee from them (v. 6).

Locusts Described (vv. 7-11)

It is very interesting to notice how many similes are used in verses 7 to 10.

These Satanic agents are said to be "like horses prepared for battle" (v. 7)—anxious and ready to carry out their commission. On their heads, as it were, "crowns like gold" (v. 7). They pretend to have royal authority.

They have "faces like men" (v. 7). They appeal to the reason.

"Hair like women" (v. 8). They are subtle.

"Teeth like lions" (v. 8). They are relentless in cruelty.

"Breastplates like iron" (v. 9). Through which truth cannot penetrate.

The "sound of their wings is like the sound of a conquering host" (v. 9).

They have "tails like scorpions." Stings in their tails (v. 10).

Isaiah 9. 15-17 suggests that the lies of the apostates act as moral poison to their followers, resulting ultimately in bitter anguish.

Having described and explained the symbols used, let us enquire what is the meaning of it all? And we will endeavour to answer briefly.

We have shown already that these judgments are the result of rejecting God's truth and accepting the Devil's lie.

Now when the fifth trumpet is sounded Satanic agencies—diabolical heresies out of the pit—appeal to man's intelligence, are subtle; but, when they have clouded man's reason and numbed man's will, they are seen to be cruel and relentless, and the anguish which such delusions cause fulfils 2 Thessalonians 2. 11-12.

"God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

It was the identical thing which happened to the Jews (Acts 28. 26, 27), and to the heathen (Rom. 1. 21-28). Verse 11 of our chapter clearly describes Satan himself. The locusts have no king, but these symbolic locusts have Satan as leader.

His name is given in Hebrew and Greek, namely, Abaddon (destruction) and Apollyon (the destroyer). Being given in both languages means that these two woes (see v. 12) are respectively against apostate Jewry and apostate Christendom. Chapter 9. 1-12 gives the judgment upon Jewry, and verses 13-21 is that upon Christendom,

The Sounding of the Sixth Trumpet

"And the sixth angel sounded and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (v. 13).

This verse, and Chapter 8. 3, contain the only two references to the golden altar in the book of Revelation. The golden altar was always connected with the prayers of God's people. The first reference (8. 3) speaks of "the golden altar before the throne," but here closer relationship is seen in the words, "the golden altar before God." This indicates that the prayers of the saints —those then on earth—are to be more immediately answered.

"Horns" are always a symbol of power. "Four" is the world number, as we have seen.

The voice comes from the place of power before God (in answer to the prayers of the saints which ascended to God in Chapter 8. 4) ordering the loosing of the four angels bound in the Euphrates (v. 14). (These four bound angels must not be confused with the four restraining angels in Chapter 7. 1.)

Verse 15 tells us that these angels were prepared to carry out God's judgments on the third part of men (Roman Empire) in the exact hour that God has planned. The duration of the judgment is not referred to here, but only the exact hour of its commencement.

Then a combination of eastern armies is seen which attack the revived Roman Empire. The first "Woe" has reference to Palestine, but this second one is a judgment on the territory of the Beast. The army (armies) is 200 million strong, or a number uncountable (v. 16). An awful slaughter takes place.

Verse 17 speaks of the fact that this mass of men is

satanically energized. Satan is allowed to protect them with what one has called "the defensive armour of hell," "breastplates of fire and of jacinth, and brimstone." Is it not striking that fire and brimstone are also symbols of the Lake of Fire?

In spite of these plagues the people did not repent, but continued in their devil-worship and gross idolatry (v. 20).

Verses 20 and 21 clearly show that man's apostasy will have led him to the worst forms of occultism and crime. And is it not evident that is where man's rebellion is rapidly leading him to-day?

We have already noticed that Chapter 7 is a parenthetical one coming between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals.

Chapter 10 to Chapter 11. 14 is parenthetical, coming between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

Chapter 16. 13-16 is also parenthetical, coming between the pouring out of the sixth and seventh vials.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER IX

115. **Star** (v. 1).—Probably Antichrist whom Satan energises.

This **"Star"** must not be confused with Chapter 8. 10.

See comments on this verse, and on Chapter 8. 3.

Some historicists believe that this Star has reference to Mohammed, who opened the pit and spread through many parts of the world, one of the vilest systems of doctrines ever produced. Though this is very suggestive, it cannot in any way be said to adequately fulfil the prophecies of our chapter. Also Chapter four unto the end of the book is still future. All these chapters have their definite fulfilment subsequent to the call of the church.

116. **Out of Heaven** (v. 1).—Moral heaven. This ruler was responsible to God to sustain righteous government: hence the expression "out of heaven."

117. **Key** (v. 1).—Competent authority.

118. **Bottomless Pit** (v. 1).—**Pit of the Abyss.**

The word "Abyss" (which occurs 7 times in this book) is a depiction of unfathomable depth, the access to which is by a covered or sealed pit. An awful description of the prison-house of demons, where iniquity is now held in check ere its final doom. (See Rev. 20. 14). See comments on verse.

119. **As the Smoke of a Great Furnace** (v. 2).—"Smoke" has a blinding effect, and "A great furnace" symbolizes "intense burning." How clearly this expression represents the blinding effect of modern heresies which are so satanic that they scorch and burn the soul. Even the "Sun" (supreme earthly ruler), and the "Air" (healthy influences of men) are blighted; that is, all that supplies the requirements and pleasures of men are polluted.

120. **Sun** (v. 2).—Supreme ruling authority.

121. **Air** (v. 2).—Satan's realm. He is the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2. 2). The word "air" also occurs in Chap. 16. 17). (See Symbol 149.)

122. **Smoke from the Pit** (v. 2).—This blinds the hearts of men so they cannot see God's light.

123. **Locusts** (vv. 3, 7).—A symbolic word. Fearful supernatural agencies of Satan. The word "power" rendered three times in verses 3 and 10, means "authority," This clearly indicates that intelligent beings (satanic agencies) are signified and not literal locusts. The real locusts are dreaded in the Near East. Man is not afflicted by them; but he is helpless as they swarm in clouds, and eat up every green thing.

These symbolic locusts torment men, and they are forbidden to hurt the grass, or any green thing—which symbolize men—for only apostate Israelites are to be attacked. The description given portrays certain moral features; and as locusts eat up all vegetation, so these symbolic ones leave behind them com-

plete spiritual devastation. The heart and conscience are tormented by the infliction of scorpion-like tails. (See comments on verse).

In Jeremiah 51. 27, the rough caterpillar (a kind of locust) is used as a simile for the horseman of the hostile nations, but in Joel 2. 4 the devastating locusts are described as an invading army of horses and horsemen—also the term "little horses" is used for locusts by some countries in the near East, because of the shape of their heads.

(See comments on these verses.)

124. **Five Months** (v. 10). This judgment is for a limited period, in which men cannot die (see verse 5).

125. **Euphrates** (v. 14).—Word also given in Chapter 16. 12. In both instances the expression "the great" is used. The Euphrates in Mesopotamia is clearly indicated in the two passages. It is significant that this river was the western limit of the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 15. 18). It was also the western boundary of the old Roman Empire. Without doubt, this signifies that the judgments prophesied in verses 13 to 21 are limited to the territory of the future resurrected Roman Empire. (See Resurrection of the old Roman Empire.)[2]

126. **Worship Devils** (Demons) (v. 20). Worst form of occultism and crime are described in verses 20, 21. "Spiritualism" (properly named "Spiritism") is "Devil Worship."

127. **Murders** (v. 21).—These will be a common occurrence because of unbridled passion and lust.

128. **Sorceries** (v. 21).—Witchcraft. God strongly condemns this wickedness in the Old Testament. The world to-day is full of Spiritism (so-called Spiritualism), and with those who consult fortune-tellers and the "black arts."

129. **Fornication** (v. 21).—Physical immorality. Companionship marriage and divorce mills (courts) are leading to what is here described—unbridled lust.

130. **Thefts** (v. 21).—No respect for property rights. All the grave sins stated in verse 21 are the direct result of apostasy. Most of them are mentioned in the curse of Chapter 22. 15.

Chapter X

THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK

THE description in verse 1 clearly shows that this "Mighty Angel" is the Lord Himself. He comes down from His home in heaven; is "clothed with a cloud" (symbol of majesty); "and a rainbow" (symbol of grace) "upon His head"; "His face as it were the sun" (compare Matthew 17. 2, which expresses the glory of the Son of Man); "and His feet as pillars of fire" (speaking of stability in judgment—which must always be in harmony with His holiness). See Symbol 12.

This is the second time the Son of Man has been described in this book. As we have seen, the first is in Chapter 1. 13-16.

Chapter 8. 3 presented to our view our Lord as the High Priest, but in this chapter He is manifested as clothed with power and majesty, for after this parenthetical portion is concluded the early establishment of the millennial reign is to be declared under the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Chap. 11. 15).

The Little Book Open (v. 8)

His glory having been described, we now read that "He had in his hand a little book open" (v. 2). This *opened* book is in contrast with the sealed scroll of Chapter 5. The whole of the seven seals of that sealed

scroll have already been broken by the Lord (8. 1), the contents of which are being successively revealed. In verse 6, He states that there is to be "time no longer," that is, no longer delay in the fulfilment of the judgments which are contained in this book.

No doubt this little book contains the unfulfilled portions of Old Testament prophecies which relate to Israel. And in this connection it is interesting to note that Chapter 11. 1-13 (which is a part of the longest parenthesis in the whole book—namely, Chapter 10. 1 to 11; 13) only contains revelations which have to do with prophecies concerning the Holy City, the Jewish remnant and their persecutors. Israel is also seen in the centre of Chapter 12. 1 to Chapter 13. 7, suffering during the terrible great tribulation.

The book in Chapter 5 was sealed—it was a new revelation. This one is small, and is an open book of prophecy. Though God reveals it, John must meditate upon it and assimilate it, as is seen in verses 9 to 11.

The Lord is shown setting His right foot upon the *sea* (restless and turbulent peoples), and His left foot on the *earth* (those having civilized government), and crying as a lion roars (vv. 2, 3).

In Chapter 5 He is before us as the Lamb. It was as the One who had suffered that He could take the title-deeds of the earth in His hand; but here He is seen in His glory and majesty as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." (Compare Chap. 5. 5.) "When He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices" (v. 3). As already noted "seven" is the number of completion or perfection, and here is seen the perfection of God's intervention in judgment in reply to the lion-like cry.

Utterance to Be Sealed (v. 4)

John is now told to "seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not" (v. 4).

We are not told here what John heard, for it was not to be written then. But it may have been revealed later on (see v. 7).

This opened book was a book of revealed truth, so anything not to be revealed could not be written.

God's Judgments Not to Be Delayed

In verse 6 we are told that this mighty angel "sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever," "that there should be no longer delay." Surely none but our Lord could assert thus that God's prophecies concerning coming judgments on the earth—chiefly because of their treatment of God's ancient people—were to be speedily fulfilled; that God's promise of the complete vanquishing of Satan and of the vindicating triumph of the Son of Man were to be no longer restrained.

The statement in verse 7 confirms the promise we have been considering in verse 6.

> "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the *mystery* (secret purposes) of God shall be *finished* (completed), as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

This is that which God promised aforetime—that His earthly people would be delivered, that His purposes concerning them would be carried out, and that the enemy would be completely overcome by the coming of Christ in power and glory (Luke 21. 27; Jude 14, 15).

When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet (Chap. 11. 15) the final judgments begin to take place. Of

these we will speak more when we come to the passages concerned.

The Little Book Eaten—Its Meaning (vv. 10-11)

John was now told to take the little book and to eat it up, the result being that it was sweet to the taste, but bitter in effect.

"And the angel said unto him—'thou must prophesy further concerning peoples, nations, tongues and kings'" (v. 11—Weymouth).

Here was the explanation given of that which was symbolized by the eating of the book. The prophecy which he was to present to others was both sweet and bitter. How strikingly is this action and the lesson from it explained in Ezekiel 3. 1-11. The prophecy now became to John a part of himself. It entered his own soul. At first it had been sweet, but bitterness and sorrow came when he considered the judgments which he must reveal: the judgments of peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER X

131. **Clothed with a Cloud** (v. 1).
A public sign of Jehovah's presence, majesty, and glory (Isa. 4. 5; Ezek. 10. 4; Matt. 17. 5). See Symbol 5.

132. **Rainbow** (v. 1).—Sign of God's grace. (See Gen. 9. 13-17).
The correct rendering is *"The* rainbow, which suggests a connection with Chapter 4. 3: *"The* rainbow upon His head" —which some have named "the crest of divinity"—is certainly symbolic of God's everlasting covenant with the earth. This is emphatically stated in Genesis 9.

133. **"He set His Right Foot upon the Sea, and His Left Foot on the Earth"** (v. 2).

An act that strikingly signifies the taking possession of everything under heaven.

(See comments on verse 2).

134. **As a Lion Roareth** (v. 3).

God's majesty in judgment. Hosea 11. 10 states: "When He shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west." Joel 3. 16 suggests that though the Lord's roar makes the heavens and the earth to shake, He is the hope and strength of His people Israel.

135. **Seven Thunders Uttered their Voices** (v. 4).

Seven is the number of perfection. This phrase expresses the perfection of God's intervention in judgment.

(Compare Job 37. 5; 40. 9.)

136. **Mystery of God. . . . Declared to the Prophets** (v. 7).

In Amos we read "The Lord God revealed His secret unto His servants the prophets." This chapter prophesies the sorrows which were to come upon Israel for sin, but they were to be followed by blessings as stated in Chapter 9. 13-15. So we find the statement, "The mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets," is a declaration of the approaching completion of the prophecy of Amos which is fulfilled in the sorrow followed by blessing on Israel as given in Chapter 11.

137. **Ate it Up** (v. 10).—Meditated upon it. Assimilated it (see Psalm 119. 103).

138. **The Roll Sweet in the Mouth but in the Belly Bitter** (vv. 8-11).

This symbolic action is parallel with that of Ezekiel (3. 1-7). He was told to eat the roll—then speak to Israel. There was the sweetness of the reception of the prophecy, but sadness on account of the judgment which would come down because of Israel's refusal to heed God's message.

Jeremiah gives a striking word which is a perfect explanation of our passage. He says, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart," and then he follows with the statement of the sorrow which the prophecy brought to him (Jer. 15. 16-18)

Chapter XI

THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

JOHN states in verses 1 and 2 that a measuring rod was given him and he was told to "measure" (sign of ownership) "the temple of God and the altar, and them that worship therein."

It is significant that "the Court which is without the temple" he was not to measure, because that was "given unto the Gentiles" to tread it down three and one-half years.

The Lord Knows His Own (v. 1)

The whole scene is a graphic one describing the restoration of Jewish worship in Jerusalem, which will take place during the tribulation period. The Lord shows here that He will accept true worshippers who come to the Brazen Altar (which is here referred to). But of the *outer court* (the court of the Gentiles—symbolizing the apostate Jews who have linked themselves with the Gentiles—God says leave it out; that is given to the Gentiles, and the Holy City (Jerusalem) they will trample under foot for forty-two months.

The Period of the Tribulation

As three and one-half years (or forty-two months) are referred to in many places in Revelation and Daniel it is important that a few words of explanation should be given.

When the church is taken up to be with the Lord, there will commence seven years of tribulation, during which the judgments mentioned in these chapters we have already considered take place; together with others that are carried out prior to the setting up of the millennial reign of Christ.

At the beginning of this period the Man of Sin will be revealed, and he will make a covenant for seven years with the Jews who have returned to Palestine (see Dan. 9. 27). When three and one-half years of this period have expired he will turn traitor and his treachery will usher in the period of "the Great Tribulation" (lasting for three and one-half years), during which the Jews suffer as never before. It is this—the latter half of the seven-year tribulation period—which is specially referred to in various ways ("time, times, and half a time," "three and a half years," "forty-two months," "twelve hundred and sixty days") in Daniel 7. 25; 9. 27; Revelation 11. 2, 3; 12. 14; 13. 5; and in our text. When these forty-two months end, then the completion of "the Times of the Gentiles," to which our Lord refers in Luke 21. 24 will have arrived. This period commenced when Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem, about 606 B.C., and finishes when our Lord's feet stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14. 4-9). (For fuller discussion of this see "The Remarkable Jew"[1] and "The Resurrection of the Old Roman Empire."[2])

The Two Witnesses (vv. 3-12)

Though Chapter 10. 1 to Chapter 11. 13 is parenthetical, the incidents related therein take one to near the end of the Great Tribulation. The length of that

period is mentioned in 11. 2 and the incidents described in verses 3 to 13 take place during that same period.

The promise is made that the Lord will give power to His two witnesses and that they will prophesy 1260 days, "clothed in sackcloth" (v. 3). He calls them "two olive trees" (symbolizing testimony), and the "two candlesticks," or "lampstands" (the Spirit's light in testimony), "standing before the God of the earth." Is there not in this a clear allusion to Zechariah 4. 2, 3, which is a prophecy of future blessing to Israel.

Many have believed that these two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, seeing that these two servants of God did not die. Others believe that Moses and Elijah are referred to, the former to represent the Law and the latter the Prophets; because these two men appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And some Scriptures, such as Malachi 4. 4, 5, are used to support the belief that Elijah personally will come before the Lord appears in power and glory.

It is also suggested that the number *two* in our chapter is symbolic, and stands for two representatives of Israel who come in the spirit of Moses and Elijah (the Lord called John the Baptist "Elijah who was to come," because he came in the spirit of Elijah); but no doubt they are the faithful remnant who testify for God in Jerusalem, for, as is well known, *two* is the number of testimony ("In the mouth of *two* or three witnesses shall every word be established") (Deut. 19. 15; 2 Cor. 13. 1). These witnesses have miraculous power given to them, and fire proceeds out of their mouths to devour those who desire to oppress them. They also have power to bring drought, to turn water into blood, and

to smite the earth with plagues. In this connection it is interesting to note that Elijah brought drought on Israel and that Moses was connected with the plagues of Egypt, which included the Nile being turned into blood.

These witnesses are to testify for a certain period, and we read that, when they had completed "their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them" (v. 7). This is the first time "the Beast" is mentioned in the book of Revelation, but of him we shall learn much more in later chapters.

It is also prophesied in verses 8-10 that their dead bodies would lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and one-half days and that the apostates of that city would gaze upon their dead bodies, and, not suffering them to be buried, would hilariously celebrate the death of these tormenting prophets.

Verse 8 does not allow us to conjecture as to the identity of the city mentioned therein. It definitely states: "Where our Lord was crucified." It is spiritually called "Sodom" and "Egypt"—Sodom because of its filthy wickedness, and Egypt because it was the idolatrous oppressor of God's people.

This description shows that under the domination of the Antichrist, Jerusalem will become the most wicked city on earth. What a blighting influence apostasy from God has on a community. In the tribulation to come its blight will be world-wide.

At the end of three and one-half days—according to verses 11 and 12—these witnesses are resurrected, and stand upon their feet; and terror strikes the wicked

beholders. Then God speaking from heaven says to them: "Come up hither," and in the sight of their enemies they ascend up in "*the* cloud" (not *a* cloud).

The cloud which led the children of Israel, and abode above the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle and in Solomon's Temple, as the public manifestation of God's majesty—"the Shekinah Glory" (see Symbols 5 and 109).

The first time we see it after its departure from sinful Israel (Ezek. 10. 19) is on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 22. 5). He, the great Antitype had come, to which all the Old Testament types pointed; and there God's presence was manifested to the chosen few.

Again, when the Lord ascended to heaven "a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1. 9). (Compare 1 Thess. 4. 17, and Rev. 1. 7.)

These Scriptures will help us to understand better the scene presented in verse 12, but this sight did not bring men to repentance.

As soon as these witnesses were caught up to God, immediately a great earthquake, not a symbolic one, destroyed "a tenth part of the city."

The number "ten" symbolizes "The perfection of order." We have the *ten plagues* on Egypt, which speak of God's perfect judgment; the *ten commandments,* which express God's perfect demands on His people; and the *ten Kingdom federation,* in which we see man's attempt at perfect cohesion.

This destruction of a tenth part of the city brings before us God's perfect retribution upon the enemies for their crimes against His two witnesses.

We also read that "By the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand." The literal translation is, "Seven thousand names of men were slain." This term "names of men," shows that certain individuals up to that number were marked out for God's righteous judgment, as truly as He had counted the seven thousand who during Elijah's ministry had been perfectly loyal to Him (1 Kings 19. 18).

The word "remnant" in verse 13, must not be confused with the Jewish remnant of Chapter 7. 3. This word really means those that were left. We could correctly read the passage as follows: "And *the rest* which were not slain were terrified, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

It is not said that they give glory to *their* God, but "to the *God of heaven,*" who had sent down the judgments. They do this in terror, not in repentance.

A similar thought is expressed in the words: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." This means that those who have not been willing to surrender to His will and adore Him as their Lord and Saviour will be compelled to bow their knee in submission, and to confess Him as Lord and Judge.

The parenthetical passage ends with the close of verse 13.

The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet (vv. 15-19)

The contents of verses 15-19 need to be very carefully examined. The rejoicing in heaven is not because the Millennial Kingdom has been established already; but in view of the certain establishment of that kingdom. Seeing that the judgments are rapidly approach-

ing completion—those in heaven can anticipate Christ's reign with rejoicing even as though the actual fulfilment had taken place.

When the seventh angel sounded, great voices in heaven say: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (v. 15). The passage would be made clearer if we render it as follows: "The Kingship of the world *now* belongs to our Lord and His Christ; and He will be King for ever and ever." It can now be seen clearly that the Lamb is about to take His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords (see Rev. 19. 16).

The redeemed host in heaven worship the Lord God, because already He is asserting His kingly power.

Two points in verse 18 need to be clarified. The Lord has begun His final work of judgment, prior to the setting up of His thousand years' reign; but the completion of this judgment—which they can see—will take place when the dead are judged before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20. 11-15) bringing complete destruction upon the destroyers of the earth. Some say that the word translated "destroy" (v. 18) means that God will annihilate men. How absurd! The second use of the word "destroy" in this verse (it is the same Greek word), does not mean annihilation. Men are not annihilating the earth in their sin, neither will God annihilate men.

The words in verse 19 may be briefly explained. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the Ark of His Testament (Covenant): and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

This verse introduces a new subject. It is really the beginning of the theme of Chapter 12. The words are symbolic evidently, for there is no temple in heaven (see Rev. 21. 22).

What was seen in the Temple? The Ark of the Covenant. Was not that the place where God met Israel through the High Priest? Was it not the place of God's presence? Then what follows shows that God remembers His covenant with Israel. In the midst of judgment He will prove Himself to be a covenant-keeping God.

The suddenness and completeness of the judgments upon earth-dwellers are described by the words: "lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail." The symbolism of these words was explained in considering Chapter 8. 5.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XI

139. **A Reed like a Rod,** or Staff (v. 1).

"A reed" was used for measuring (see Ezek., chaps. 40-42; Rev. 21. 15). "A staff" suggests firmness, or strength. Isaiah 14. 5 states, "The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked" (*i.e.,* their strength). (See also Isa. 3. 1; Isa. 36. 6; 2 Kings 18. 21).

140. **Measure** (v. 1).

It is interesting to note that the command was only to "measure the temple of God, the altar, and the true (Jewish) worshippers therein." That which was to be under the control and tyranny of the Gentiles was not to be measured. This implies that God was merely measuring off His own property. As sign of His ownership of the part measured, and of His protection of those loyal to His name.

We have the incident of the measuring of Ezekiel's future temple and the land. Nearly thirty times he measured different details as stated in Chapters 40-42.

141. **The Court which is Without** (v. 2).

The "outer" enclosure of the temple symbolizes the great number of mere professors (Jewish) who look to man, instead of to God, for deliverance; while the "inner" enclosure is symbolic of true (Jewish) worshippers. These believers cannot represent the church, because she has no temple or altar; and she will then be with her Lord.

142. **Forty and Two Months** (v. 2).

The length of the Great Tribulation; the latter half of the tribulation period, which lasts for seven years.

The latter 3½ years is so often mentioned in Daniel and Revelation because the man of sin reveals his true character, and becomes the great Jewish persecutor. (See Dan. 24. 15; Rev. 13. 5-8, etc., etc.)

143. **Power** (v. 3).—Efficacy.

144. **Clothed in Sackcloth** (v. 3).

Sign of sorrow or mourning. These witnesses identify themselves with Israel's sin which is so grievous, in the midst of wicked Jerusalem, as is referred to in verse 8. (See Joel 1. 13; Jer. 4. 8).

145. **My Two Witnesses** (v. 3).—See comments on verse.

146. **The Beast** (v. 7).

The head of the resurrected Roman Empire.

He comes out of the bottomless pit (abyss). He is led by Satan. This is the first time he is mentioned in the Revelation. As a bitter persecutor he is described in Revelation 13. 1-10, etc., etc. (See "The Resurrection of the Roman Empire."[2])

147. **Rewards** (v. 18).—Recompense for loyal service and faithfulness under trial.

148. **Servants, the Prophets, etc.** (v. 18).

The three classes mentioned are:

1. **Servants, the Prophets.** Witnesses of every dispensation including the sealed ones of Chapter 7. 3 (who are called servants) and the two prophets mentioned in verse 10.

2. **The Saints.** All believers before and after the Cross.

3. **Them that Fear Thy Name, etc.** No matter what position they have in society, the Lord is faithful in reward, as He says in Chapter 22. 12, "My reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be."

149. **Shouldst Destroy them that Destroy the Earth** (v. 18).

This is a picture of the final judgment (Chap. 20. 11-15).

When the judgment—which is stated in this verse in anticipation—is completely fulfilled, then our eternity will begin.

150. **Opened** (v. 19).—See Symbol 74.

The real beginning of Chapter 12.

Verse 18 closes with the final judgment upon sin. Verse 19 commences a section in which Israel is prominently brought forward as persecuted and delivered by the final battle of the Armageddon. This section closes with Chapter 14.

151. **The Ark of His Testament (Covenant)** (v. 19).

See comment on verse.

Chapter XII

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN-CHILD

"And there appeared a great wonder (sign) in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

"And there appeared another wonder (sign) in heaven: and, behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

"And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne" (vv. 1-5).

THIS chapter commences with the above words. Many conjectures have been made in relation to the identity of this woman and her man-child, but there should be no difficulty in understanding the symbolism of this passage.

Verse 19 of Chapter 11 being connected with the revelation in Chapter 12, clearly shows that Israel is in view and from Chapter 11. 19 to 14. 20, is really one connected prophecy.

Considering the detail of the passage, we find that the first verse of Chapter 12 states that "there appeared *a great wonder* (or sign) *in heaven.*" This means that all is known of God's purposes in heaven. That "the woman" was on earth is clearly shown in the chapter.

The Identity of the Woman and of the Man-Child (v. 5)

The Woman is Israel. The Child is Christ. The woman is "clothed with the sun," etc. (v. 1), or clothed upon with Christ, who will yet be recognised as the Sun of Righteousness. The moon under her feet speaks of her derived glory, and a crown of twelve stars symbolizes the twelve tribes; for their future glory and rule (as typified by the crown) can only be seen in their accepted Messiah. (Read about Joseph's dream in Genesis 37. 9.)

Before we consider verse 2 we must note that *Israel,* not the Church, gave birth to Christ. Many Old Testament Scriptures prophesied this, and the facts of history prove it. The assertion of some, that the woman represents the church, is therefore untenable.

Again, verse 5 states that this man-child is "to rule all nations with a rod of iron"; therefore the child can only represent Christ (see Psa. 2. 9).

Travailing in Birth (v. 2)

The travailing in birth mentioned in verse 2 has reference to Israel's sufferings during the Great Tribulation, as verses 6. 13-17 clearly point out. Many Old Testament Scriptures could be given in support of this, but two references will suffice.

The first is found in Micah 5. 2-3 where the prophet states that Bethlehem would bring forth "a ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." A definite prophecy of the Incarnation—very God in very flesh (v. 2).

Then the prophet says that God was to give up this nation (Israel) "until the time that she which travaileth

hath brought forth:" when the remnant of Israel would return (v. 3).

The second reference is seen in Isaiah 66. 7, the truth of which is clearly proved in Revelation 12; the chapter we are now considering. Note the striking expression as we quote it fully.

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man-child."

If one reads the verses which follow (vv. 8-24) it will be seen that the chapter is a remarkable prophecy of Israel's joy, gladness, and blessing which follow their deliverance from the awful tribulation which is foretold in Revelation 12 and 13.

To confirm these statements we will note the following observations: Do not the words of Isaiah 66. 7 clearly prove that the man-child (Christ) was to be born before Zion (Israel) travailed? Also in verse 8, the second and third questions require an affirmative answer, and it is given in the final clause.

"For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." In other words, the sorrows of the terrible tribulation period will not end until Israel sees her Messiah (see Zech. 12. 10). Then the nation (Israel) will be born in a day (see Rom. 11. 26).

Travail—The Result of Sin

We read that after the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, and as a direct result of their sin, the Lord said to Eve:

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in *sorrow* thou shalt bring forth children" (Gen. 3. 16).

Is it not clearly taught in Scripture that travail of women is the result of sin in Eden? It is also stated in 1 Thess. 5. 3—which refers to the wicked—that: "Sudden destruction cometh upon them, as upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." Again, we note Paul's words in 1 Tim. 2. 14-15.

"The woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved (preserved) in child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity (love), and holiness with sobriety (discretion)."

We surely have no doubt, after having read these Scriptures, that travail—connected with childbirth—is because of inherited sin. But could there be travail in connection with the birth of Christ? Certainly not! For our Lord was virgin born. He was very God in very flesh. Therefore the words, "Travailing in birth" —as stated in verse 2—could not in any way refer to Mary in giving birth to Christ.

It is now clearly seen that verse 2 can only prophesy of the sufferings of Israel in the still future Great Tribulation. The same figure is used in Isa. 26. 15-18 as a prophecy of their future sorrows.

The Sign of the Dragon (v. 3)

This wonder is a "great red dragon" (the first time in Scripture that that old serpent, the Devil, is so called). The name Dragon signifies a cruel oppressor, and this term is often used in Old Testament descriptions of enemies of God's people. The word "Red" indicates his murderous character. Then it is stated that he has "seven heads and ten horns" (and we may note that these occur again in the designation of the first beast of Chapter 13. 1).

The Dragon has also seven crowns or diadems upon his heads (v. 3). These represent despotic power, and speak of his complete authority, and of his unseen sway both before and after the Roman Empire comes into existence again.

The Dragon's "tail drew the third part (Roman Empire) of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth" (v. 4). It has already been pointed out that stars represent those who have authority allowed by God. In this passage their moral collapse is prophesied.

The close of verse 4 and verse 5 are historic. When Christ was born many attempts were made by Herod and others to kill Him, and He was caught up unto God and to His throne, at His ascension (Acts 1. 9; 7. 56).

The Place of Refuge (vv. 6, 14)

According to verse 6, the Woman (Israel) flees into the wilderness to a place prepared by God, and there will be fed 1260 days. This has reference to the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation, during which the Lord gives protection to His earthly people.

It is believed by many that Petra (the "Sela" of the Scriptures), the rockhewn city of Transjordania—a natural and impregnable fortress—which was once the home of the ancient Horites (Rock-dwellers) mentioned in Gen. 36. 21 (see "Palestine, God's Monument of Prophecy"[7]), will be the place in which God will care for and protect them during these awful days. This was the only possible place which we were able to discover in the whole of the Near Eastern Desert during our travel through that land. Whether this is the "place prepared by God," or not, we know that *somewhere* God will provide safety and sustenance for His people.

Michael, Israel's Prince (v. 7)

Verse 7 continues the prophecy of our chapter and speaks of war in heaven. There Michael and his angels fight against the Dragon and his angels and completely defeat them, casting them down to the earth. Now heaven rejoices because the accuser of God's people is cast out. He is no longer the prince of the power of the air.

Michael the archangel is "the great prince which standeth for the children" of Daniel's people (Dan. 12. 1). His name is mentioned five times in Scripture, and always in connection with the Old Testament saints. (See Dan. 10. 13-21; 12. 1; Jude 9; and our passage.)

The earth dwellers are then warned of the tyranny which will result to them now that Satan is cast to the earth and is in great wrath; because he knows that his appointed time is short. Woe will be theirs in truth.

The Great Tribulation Begins

The Devil then commences a most bitter persecution of the woman, to whom however God gives "two wings of a great eagle," and she flies to the prepared place and is protected and nourished there (vv. 13, 14).

The "eagle" is a symbol which is used in Scripture for God's protection of His people (see Exod. 19. 4; Deut. 32. 11, 12). The period mentioned is also spoken in Daniel 7. 25. The word "time" (singular) means one year; "times" (dual) means two years; "half a time" means half a year. These give three and one-half years in all. This is the same period which is given in days in verse 6.

The Serpent now sends out of his mouth water like a river after the woman. According to Chapter 17. 15, "waters" speak of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (see Chap. 17. 15): so "water like a river" represents nations that are energized by Satanic power, who, in their hostility go out after the Jews wherever they may be found to exterminate them. But they are preserved—"The earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood" (v. 16). This points to those friendly nations who, having accepted the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, protect these persecuted Jews. Because of this protection, the Devil, in great wrath, makes war with the godly remnant of the Jews remaining in Palestine.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XII

152. **Wonder** (vv. 1, 3).—Sign.

153. **Woman** (v. 1).—Israel. See comments on verse.

154. **Tail . . .** of the Dragon (v. 4).

Subtlety of Satan creating malevolent influence through corrupt teaching. Isaiah 9. 15 states that the lying prophet is the "tail." (See comment on Chap. 9. 10).

155. **Dragon** (v. 4).

This designation is a well known Old Testament figure of cruel oppression; for God calls "Pharaoh the great dragon" (Ezek. 29. 3). The Egyptians worshipped Typho (out of fear) as the God of evil. The word "Typhoon" has its origin in this word, as an evil thing to be avoided.

156. **Man-Child** (v. 5).—The Lord Jesus. See comments on verse.

157. **Two Wings of a Great Eagle** (v. 14).—See comments on Chapter 4. 7.

How beautiful is this symbol of the eagle.

The Lord uses it in His Word as an expression of His care for, and His leading of Israel.

"I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself" (Exod. 19. 4).

"As an eagle taketh her young, and beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead them" (Deut. 32. 12).

158. **Water as a Flood** (v. 15).

Lit. rend.: "Water like a river." Symbolic of "nations" who are energized by Satan with anti-Semitic hatred. (On "waters representing nations" see Chap. 17. 15).

159. **Keep the Commandments of God** (v. 17).

Sign of true godliness. (The woman's seed—Israel—is here referred to, as this verse clearly indicates.)

160. **Testimony of Jesus** (v. 17).

They witnessed as to Who He was, and Who He is, and they wait for and witness to the truth that He is coming to set up His Kingdom, and reign for evermore.

J.N.D. strikingly states "that the testimony of Jesus Christ is the testimony that He has rendered Himself, not the testimony that is rendered unto Him." This suggestion is worthy earnest consideration.

Chapter XIII

THE TWO BEASTS

IN Chapter 13 we have the prophetic picture, in greater detail, of the awful three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation. The two beasts of that period are the central theme of the chapter.

The Roman Prince (vv. 1-8)

John now says:

> "I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Beast rise up out of the *sea*, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns (diadems), and upon his heads the names of blasphemy" (v. 7).

In Scripture the *sand of the sea* pictures a great multitude. So God said to Abraham: "I will make thy seed as the sand upon the sea shore" (Gen. 22. 17). "The Sea" represents the unsettled condition of mankind, so this beast is seen arising during a period of chaos. Daniel shows that this fourth Empire will be manifested as having feet made partly of clay (a disintegrating democratic rule; see Dan. 2. 43-44).

The word "sea" may have a secondary meaning here, which is very important to note. Daniel (Chap. 7. 2, 3), in his vision, saw that the four winds (the four empires, see comment on Chapter 7. 1) strove upon the great sea (Mediterranean), and four great beasts came up from (around) the "sea." Here the word "sea" may also suggest the Mediterranean around which all the four empires come. Therefore it is perfectly in har-

mony with Scripture if others state that the word "sea" in Revelation 13. 1 also represents the Mediterranean, which is so often referred to in prophecy.

The beast is seen as having ten horns and seven heads (as the revised version gives it). Comparing this with Daniel 7. 24, we may learn that this beast is none other than the head of the revived Roman Empire which will be in a ten-kingdom form, and will last until the end of the seven years of tribulation.

These ten horns are crowned with "diadems." "Crowns" denote constitutional rule, but "diadems" despotic power. The beast is shown to be a despotic usurper. In Revelation 19. 12, our blessed Lord is manifested wearing many diadems. He is not a usurper, but it is His right to reign, for He has absolute authority to reign over all kingdoms and governments. He is Lord of all. We may note that the Beast has ten diadems upon his "horns," but the Dragon has diadems upon his "heads" (12. 3). *Horns* throughout Scripture speak of power; hence the Beast is seen as actually in possession of Imperial rule, while the Dragon whose *heads* are crowned is the unseen influence behind the Beast. "Heads" represent leadership, or control.

Upon the Beast's seven (completeness) heads are names of blasphemy. He is viewed in utter defiance of God. The seven heads remind us that before the Roman Empire was destroyed there had existed six forms of government. Its form as revived will be the seventh. (See Comment on Chapter 17. 11.)

Verse 2 describes this beast as combining in himself the infamy and ferocity of the three Empires before him. The animals mentioned here are described in the

reverse order of Daniel 7. The reason is obvious. Daniel looks down the period of the Times of the Gentiles from the beginning—from Babylon to the end—but in the book of Revelation John is describing the condition of the end, therefore looks from the close, back to the beginning.

Verse 2 closes with the words: "And the dragon gave him his power, his seat (throne), and great authority." Here we have explained the reason why Chapter 12. 3 is written, for it gives the Satanic origin of the beast's power.

The head "wounded to death" speaks of the *imperial* form of the Roman Empire which was vanquished about A.D. 476 by the sword of the barbarians of the north. It is this imperial form which comes back to life. Surely no one can deny that attempts in Italy did demonstrate how preparations could be made rapidly for its resurrection. (See "The Resurrection of the Old Roman Empire."[2])

This great political head joins with the second beast of our chapter—the great religious head—and makes a seven year covenant with the Jewish people, but after half that period he breaks it and becomes their greatest persecutor. Throughout Old Testament history they came under the tyranny of every nation whom they so often trusted instead of depending on the Lord. This will be the last time that they will fail in this regard. They will be glad to accept the deliverance of their returned Messiah and Lord (Zech. 12. 10).

The healing of this "head" leads to the worship of the Dragon as energizer of the Beast, and also to the worship of the Beast, men saying: "Who is like unto

the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" He now becomes a great blasphemer against God, but is allowed to continue in power for forty-two months (the three and one-half years of Great Tribulation).

Only the latter half of the seven year period of the Tribulation is referred to in verse 5—also in Chap. 11. 2, and other verses—because forty-two months is the maximum of time which the Lord allows these two satanically led supermen to carry on their bitter oppression of Jerusalem, and of the nations associated with the resurrected Roman Empire. The Lord closes this brief period by His personal coming to deliver Jerusalem; to wipe out the nations surrounding it; and to cast the Beast and the False Prophet into the Lake of Fire (Chap. 19. 20).

Still blaspheming God, His Name, His dwelling place, and the dwellers in heaven, he is permitted to overcome God's ancient people (Jews) and to exercise authority over all kindreds and tongues, and nations (v. 7), holding universal sway over them. Heaven, and all belonging to it, will be scorned, and ridiculed, by this demonized superman.

All earth-dwellers (God's people now are only "sojourners" here), whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life of the Lamb, will worship him (v. 8). For this the world is being prepared to-day.

The Lord then gives a word of exhortation (v. 10), saying:

> "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword."

They are not to be afraid to trust in the justice of their God. As their warfare is spiritual they are not to

use carnal weapons for no one can rob them of their inheritance through the Lamb. "Here is the patience (endurance) and the faith of the saints."

The words of verse 10 are a prophecy of the Great Tribulation, and they do not have any application whatever to the age in which *we* live.

The Antichrist or False Prophet

John says:

"I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon" (v. 11).

It is necessary to note that this beast comes up out of the *earth,* while the beast of verse 1 comes up out of the *sea.* The former arises first and at the time of terrible chaos (sea) while the latter arises after, appearing when chaos has given place to order, when revolutionary conditions have been superseded by settled government (earth).

As the word "sea" in verse 1 has been shown that it may also represent the Mediterranean, so the word "earth" in verse 11 can be given a secondary meaning to represent the prophetic earth (Palestine). This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that the second beast of our chapter reigns in Jerusalem while the first beast reigns in Rome.

The first beast of our chapter is the Roman Empire, which is reigned over by the Roman Prince (usurping God's place), while the second beast is the Antichrist, or False Prophet, who reigns in Jerusalem.

The first is a Gentile, but the second is a Jew who is subordinate to the first. As we have seen, ten horns characterize the first beast, while two horns characterize the second, these being like those of a lamb. It is in-

teresting to note that the word *lamb,* used twenty-seven times elsewhere in the book of Revelation always denotes the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, and this occurrence is no exception. He imitates the Lamb of God as Priest and King (as represented by the two horns), but he speaks as a dragon. Of our Lord it was said that "Never man spake like this Man," but this Antichrist speaks like his energizer—Satan—who enables him to exercise the power of the first beast and to compel all to worship him "whose deadly wound was healed."

Imitating Elijah, he causes fire to come down from heaven as a proof of his assumed messiahship.

Our Lord, the true Messiah, was asked for such a sign, but refused, stating that the sign of Jonas—His death, burial and resurrection—was the only sign which would be given to them. (See Luke 9. 54-56; Matt. 16. 1-4; Matt. 12. 38-40.)

This beast gives the sign—which Christ refused—and by it he captivates and enslaves the apostate Jews. He not only orders the making and the setting up of an image to the first beast, but gives (*not* life, but) breath to it. God alone can give life—but Antichrist gives the appearance of life to the image of the beast, also causing the image to speak and that every one who refused to worship it should die. This beast is the individual who is called by Paul the Man of Sin, who sets up the image in the restored temple in Jerusalem and not only demands worship of it, but also of himself and at length demands all divine honours. (See 2 Thess. 2. 4.) He is also wonderfully described in Daniel 11. 36-39 as a wilful king. This kingship he apparently loses to the first

beast (who ultimately assumes complete autocratic sway in Palestine) and finishes as false prophet.

A time of awful tyranny succeeds, for he compels all, from the smallest to the greatest, to receive the mark of the beast in the right hand or in the forehead, or otherwise not to be allowed either to buy or sell. The *mark* is to be either the *name* of the Beast, or the *number* which his name represents. Many are the conjectures which have been made as to these.

Now as to the person himself, we are informed plainly that he will not be revealed in his true character until after the church has been caught up to be with the Lord. "The hinderer," whose removal is necessary before the Man of Sin can be revealed, being none other, we believe, than the Holy Spirit in the church. (See 2 Thess. 2. 7.)

As to the number it is said:

> "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a (certain) man, and his number is 666" (v. 18).

This shows that the Beast will ultimately be identified by his number; but because, as we have seen, he cannot be revealed as such until the rapture of the church takes place, therefore this verse will have special application only to the faithful ones of the tribulation period. The many contradictory speculations and supposed identifications which have been and which are being made behoove us to avoid going beyond the revealed Word. And again, if we knew for certain who the Beast is—for he is without doubt already on earth—we would be able to determine, with fair accuracy, the time of the Rapture, which has been kept secret from

us. In such a case faith would turn to sight, and the blessing to the lover and watcher for His appearing could not be realized (2 Tim. 4. 8).

When comparing 2 Thessalonians 2 and other Scriptures with Revelation 13, the special relationship between the two beasts is sometimes a little confusing and such passages need to be very carefully examined. Even J.N.D. admits this in the following words: "What I am doubtful of is whether some passages which, in general, are applied to the first beast, would not rather apply to the second."

Much information has come to us which proves that we are rapidly nearing the time of the end. There is no question whatever but that we are heading up to the reign of the Beast. We may expect to hear at any moment of the beginning of the fulfilment of verses 16 and 17, though the completion of such fulfilment will not be possible until the church is with her Lord.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XIII

161. **Sands of the Sea** (v. 1).

This expression is used eighteen times in the Old Testament and in every place, except one (Job 6. 3), it means a vast multitude.

In the New Testament it is employed four times and only once (in our verse) it is not definitely stated to represent a great multitude.

We can, therefore, emphatically assert that it represents a vast concourse of people as is expressed in Chapter 20. 8.

The word "Sea" in its second occurrence in this verse is in contrast to the word earth in verse 11. (See comments on these verses.)

162. **A Beast** (v. 1).—Roman Prince.

Assuming the power and influence of the revived Roman Empire. (See comments on chapter.)

163. **Sea** (v. 1).

Unsettled condition of the godless nations. Isaiah 57. 20 signicantly states: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

164. **One of his Heads** (v. 3).

The seventh (and last) form of government of the Roman Empire—the Imperial—was defeated in war. It then ceased to exist.

165. **Deadly Wound was Healed** (v. 3).

This is prophetic of the Imperial form of the Roman Empire. It is viewed as having already taken place. This is the usual method in Biblical prophecy. It cannot be claimed that such method of expression is a proof that John was writing history. One would be equally justified in stating that Psalm 22—which is patently Messianic—is recorded history and not prophecy. (See "Resurrection of the Roman Empire.")[2]

166. **Another Beast** (v. 11).

Antichrist or False Prophet. (See comments on chapter.)

167. **Earth** (v. 11). Settled Government.

Order has been restored by the Roman Prince.

168. **Like a Lamb** (v. 11).

This second beast has two horns like a lamb. The word "Lamb" occurs in twenty-seven other places in the book and is always used to designate the Lamb of God. The use in this verse can be no exception to the rule. This beast imitates the Lamb of God. (See comments on this verse.)

169. **Wonders** (v. 13).—Literal translation is "Signs."

When we can see the great advance of present-day science, it is not to be wondered at that this demonised dictator will be able to astonish people with his cleverness. The electrical "Robot" (a mechanical man) which has been perfected for some time in Britain, can move its ponderous body when spoken to. If this and many other wonderful achievements can be wrought through scientific means, then Satan can easily make possible the fulfilment of those things prophesied in verses 12-15.

170. **Deceiveth** (v. 14).

People are deceived because they take this remarkable power of the superman as a sign of divinity. They now look upon him as Christ.

171. **Miracles** (v. 14).—Literal translation: "Signs."

172. **Life** (v. 15).—Literal translation: "Breath."

Only God can give life. This man will provide the imitation.

173. **Image of the Beast** (v. 15).

This is the image of the Roman Prince which is to be set up in Jerusalem, where temple-worship has again been established. This image is mentioned in Matthew 24. 15 by the word "abomination," which in the Scriptures means an "idol." (See also 2 Thess. 2. 4.)

174. **Speak** (v. 15).

Though this will be done through Satanic power, yet science has already accomplished a similar thing, by transforming power-waves into sound-waves. This need not underestimate the tremendous manifestation of Satanic deception as revealed in this chapter.

175. **Mark** (vv. 16, 17).

The "mark" is to be in the right hand or in the forehead. We saw in Rev. 7. 3, that the "seal" in the forehead was to be a public sign of ownership; therefore a "mark" in the forehead will be a public sign of abject submission to the Beast. What does it mean to have the mark in the right hand? The dictator (Antichrist) who compels this, is allied with the Roman Prince; and the Roman salute—raising the right hand—was even restored by Mussolini as the official salute of the Italians. Verses 14-17 show that those who so refuse to become slaves to the Beast must starve and die.

176. **The Number 666** (v. 18).

Many attempts have been made to name the beast whose number is 666, but it is foolish to try and designate him before the church goes up to meet the Lord. When the Lawless One appears it will be easy to prove that it is he, by his acts and the counting of his name.

The **Gematria** of a language is the numerical value of the letters in a word. In Latin D, C, L, X, V, I stand for numerals.

D—500
C—100
L—50
X—10
V—5
I—1
M—1000 was added later.

These were the only Roman letters so used, but in Greek every letter of the alphabet had its numerical equivalent. Our verse states that the numerical equivalent of the name of the coming beast will be 666.

It is interesting to note that the six letters of Roman Gematria given on this page (apart from the "M") total 666.

Again, the Greek equivalent for Roman or Latin is *lateinos,* and in Greek Gematria these letters also total 666. Many say that this proves the beast to be a Roman. But many other words in Greek and Latin can be so totalled, therefore such a guess is unreliable.

We have already stated (in our "Significance of Numbers") that 6 is the number of man and of incompleteness. We can see this in the fact that 6 in the Scriptures is so connected with man. Six hundred and sixty-six is man's number thrice repeated, which many call the trinity of evil.

In Greek an old letter called *sigma* was used for 6, and three of these letters together (representing 666) were symbols of Isis.

Also the initial and final letters of the Greek word *Christos* (Christ), with the fourteenth letter of the Greek alphabet (the symbol of the serpent) between them also represents 666. This is very interesting, but the real meaning of our verse is that the numerical equivalent of this lawless one's name is 666.

It is striking to note that Nebuchadnezzar the despot of the first universal empire made an image of himself 60 cubits high and 6 cubits—66 (Dan. 3)—and compelled worship under pain of death. He also used 6 kinds of instruments as a signal for this idolatrous worship.

He as the first king of "the times of the Gentiles" was a type of the last despot who will compel all to worship his image or die, and his number will be 666.

Chapter XIV

GOD INTERVENES IN GRACE DURING JUDGMENTS ON APOSTATES

"And I looked, and lo, the Lamb stood upon Mount Zion and with him 144,000, having his name and his Father's name in their foreheads" (Revised Version, v. 1).

THE visions here are mainly anticipative. This company is the same as the 144,000 of Chapter 7.

The 144,000 in Chapter 7. 3 were sealed as a sign of ownership and a guarantee of preservation: having the Lord's Name and His Father's Name written in their foreheads: symbolic of the fact that the Lord publicly acknowledges their acceptance of Him as their Lord, and of their refusal to receive the sign of ownership of the Beast. (See Chap. 13. 16, 17.)

Verse 3 of our chapter indicates that this company also includes all who are of the godly Jewish remnant and who suffered martyrdom under the Beast.

Romans 11. 25 speaks of the "fulness of the Gentiles," which represents the completion of the church, after which "all (true) Israel shall be saved" (v. 26). The 144,000 (a fixed number as already shown) of our chapter also embraces this company.

It is clearly shown in Chapter 20. 6 that the whole of this Jewish remnant will be specially honoured by reigning with Christ 1000 years.

The Lamb stands on Mount Zion with the 144,000, so this is an earthly scene. Mount Zion occurs 110

times in Scripture, and it represents kingly grace on earth (see Heb. 12. 22).

John heard a voice from (lit.: "out of") heaven, and the voice was that of harps (harp singers) harping with their harps. These are the faithful Jews who are referred to in Chapter 6. 9-11; namely, those already slain (martyred), and "their fellow servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

We, therefore, see that the harpers were Jewish martyrs who in Chapter 6. 10 cry to the Lord; and also those who are martyred in the terrible tribulation.

Verses 2 and 3 show that heaven is singing a *new* song, because the blessings promised are already appearing on earth. The link between heaven and earth is clearly seen in the fact that the 144,000 (as the firstfruits of God's grace redeemed from the earth during the tribulation period) are the only ones able to learn that song. This company of 144,000 cannot be the church, because they sing before the redeemed host which includes the church. They are the whole of redeemed Israel who are now saved through seeing their Lord (read Zech. 12. 10—13. 1). For discussion of the "Redeemed Host" see Chapter 4.

In verse 4 the first clause speaks of spiritual purity, and we read that these were purchased from among men (sign of God's great grace) to be "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." This suggests that they will have a prior place of blessing compared with the great Gentile host of Chapter 7.

To be found spotless, and untouched by the Devil's lie (v. 5) during such awful tribulation is a glorious tribute to the wonders of God's preserving grace.

The Everlasting Gospel Proclaimed

Another vision follows. "An angel (messenger) is viewed flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Some think that the messenger mentioned portrays the converted Jews who will preach, not the Gospel of God's grace, which is for this church age, but the "Gospel of the Kingdom," which is the heralding of the fact that Christ is to set up His Kingdom on earth.

There will be great grace displayed during the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, but verse 6 tells of the preaching of the "Everlasting Gospel," the contents of such being given in verse 7, which informs us that the people are told to give glory to God *alone,* for the hour of judgment is come. They are also to worship Him Who made all things. They have been worshipping the creature (the Beast); now they are commanded to worship the Creator as Sovereign Lord. This is the reason why the word "everlasting" is used.

There is no judgment which has come on the earth, but the Lord has immediately preceded it by a special message. The "Everlasting Gospel," therefore, is the last phase of the Gospel proclamation calling earth-dwellers to repentance, and proclaiming the certainty and imminence of judgment upon the ungodly. It is grace then in the midst of judgment, but in contrast to this, the Gospel of the grace of God which is going

on to-day is for the purpose of calling out a redeemed people to be the heavenly bride of the Lamb, who is soon to establish His millennial reign. The striking announcement in verse 8 of the fall of Babylon anticipates the full revelation contained in Chapters 17 and 18.

The word "City" was probably put into our Authorised Version merely to help the reading, but as it is not in the original text we will delete it. This is the great adulterous Babylon (religious system), which by this time will have intoxicated and corrupted all nations with the filthiness of her intercourse with them.

Chapter 17. 16-17 reveals that Babylon (the whore) is wiped out by the ten kings of the revived Roman Empire, who are carrying out God's will. Having given their full authority to the Beast, he now persecutes with greater fury than ever, and is therefore mentioned in verse 9 of our chapter. God then threatens great judgments against his followers.

Worshippers of the Beast—God's Warning and Their Doom (vv. 9-11)

A third angel is now heard crying with a loud voice, "If any man worship the beast and his image and receives his mark in his forehead or his hand" he must drink the cup of God's wrath, and be tormented in the lake of fire and brimstone (see Rev. 19. 20); the smoke of their torment ascending for ever and ever.

These are terrible judgments which God threatens against the worshippers of the Beast. The literal rendering of verse 10 is: "He also shall drink of the fury of God prepared unmixed in the cup of His wrath."

The word "unmixed" means that no alleviating circumstances will be permitted in these judgments; and verse 11 states they will be eternal. There is no doubt that God looks upon the worship of the Beast as one of the worst of sins. In the midst of this threat a note of encouragement is sounded to His saints to be faithful (see verse 12).

Blessed are the Martyred Dead

Verse 13 tells us that a voice proclaims this from heaven. The blessing pronounced refers to those who have died as martyrs and to those who are in danger of martyrdom.

The words of verse 13 are significant. "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." These words convey two facts: the nearness of the end of the tribulation period, and the certainty that the Lord will not fail to reward such faithful service.

What a message of hope this will be to those faithful ones of that day. The Beast may kill their bodies, but their souls belong to God.

Earth Reaping its Harvest (vv. 14-20)

A vision of the Son of Man is now described. He is seen sitting on a white cloud. He is crowned and He has in His hand a sharp sickle. Another angel comes out of the temple (symbolic of the place of God's presence) and cries to Him to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe. He does so, and the earth is reaped, that is, He gathers His own and leaves the others for judgment.

Another angel also comes from the temple having a

sharp sickle. He is followed by another angel coming out from the brazen altar. He has power over fire for the altar of sacrifice has now become the altar of judgment.

This angel cried with a loud voice to the angel with the sharp sickle, saying: "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe" (v. 18). The *vine* in Scripture usually speaks of the fruitfulness of Israel when connected with the true vine; but in this case they are wild grapes of the vine of the earth—representing apostasy from God.

The angel reaps and casts these Jewish and Gentile apostates into the great winepress of God's wrath. The winepress is trodden without the city (Jerusalem). The scene is that of the battle of Armageddon—the first time referred to in the book—especially the last clause, "blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of 1600 furlongs" (about 200 miles). It is strikingly significant that Palestine is about this length, and some suggest that it means that the whole of Palestine will be drenched with blood. It certainly prophesies of a terrible slaughter on a definitely limited area. (For discussion on the fight against the Northern combination related in Ezekiel 38, and 39 —which is not Armageddon—read "Great Northern Confederacy."[4])

What an awful time is awaiting the apostates! What terrible retribution is coming! Every reader should see that he is ready to meet the Lord who may come at any moment so that he may be in glory when these judgments come on earth.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XIV

177. **The Number 144,000** (v. 1).

It symbolizes the highest order of administrative perfection. (See number 12 in the Chapter on "The Significance of Numbers.")

178. **Harps** (v. 2).

This word is used forty-three times in the Old Testament and is always connected with song. It was one of the sweetest instruments of music known.

It is mentioned in our text as a symbol of great joy. Because of sorrow the song of the harp ceases (Isa. 24. 8). In captivity they had no joy, so they hung their harps on the willow trees (Psa. 137. 2).

179. **A New Song** (v. 3).

See comment on Chapter 5. 9.

180. **Virgins, etc.** (v. 4).

Spiritual purity is expressed here. They have not become tainted with the harlotry of the beast. Men and women are included in this company, therefore purity of the body is not even suggested. (See comment on verse.)

181. **The Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb** (v. 4).

These are not the firstfruits of all saved ones, for the "elders" are now in glory (see Symbol 72). They are the firstfruits from Israel's field.

182. **Another Angel** (v. 6).—"Angel" means "messenger."

As God has never committed the preaching of any Gospel to an angel, the expression symbolizes the faithful Jewish remnant who will be the missionaries during the period of the tribulation.

183. **Everlasting Gospel** (v. 6).

The Gospel that Christ is soon to set up His Kingdom. It is the last phase of the Gospel proclamation calling earth-dwellers to repentance; and announcing the certainty and imminence of judgment upon the rejectors. It is an invitation to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people—probably given mainly by believing Jews—to break off their worship of the Beast and his idolatry, and to bow in worship of the One who created all men.

Note the contrast. The Gospel of the Grace of God which is preached to-day is that God is calling out of the world a people for Himself; but it does not proclaim that He is **now** coming to set up His Kingdom. After the Church is taken up to be with her Lord, then, this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached when multitudes will be saved (Chap. 7. 9-14). On the Gospel of the Kingdom read Matt. 24. 14, and comments on our verse.

184. **Babylon** (v. 8).

Ecclesiastical Babylon. Guilty of corrupting all nations with her spiritual adultery, *i.e.*, paganised religion. Word "Babylon" means confusion. (See discussion on "Thyatira" in Chap. 2: and comments on Chaps. 17 and 18).

185. **Nations Drink, etc.** (v. 8).

Because of Babylon's corrupting of them, the nations are morally mad—"wrath" means "fury" in this verse—to the point of uncontrollable passion. Babylon was the prototype of religious Babylon. (See words of our verse in Jer. 51. 7, 8.)

186. **Wine** (v. 10).

Wine is in contrast to verse 8. They drank wine (pleasure of the harlot) so now they will drink wine (judgment) of God's wrath.

187. **Henceforth** (v. 13).—"From now."

The end of the tribulation was approaching and so was their glory and joy.

188. **A White Cloud** (v. 14).—See Symbols 5 and 131.

189. **Sharp Sickle** (v. 14).—Thoroughly harvested (See Joel 3. 13).

190. **Temple** (v. 15).—God's immediate presence.

191. **Winepress** (v. 19).

God's fierce wrath which will come upon the apostates without stint. (See Isa. 63. 3-6, also comment on verse.)

Chapter XV

THE ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

THIS chapter is connected with Chapter 16. In this seven angels are given the seven last plagues and vials of God's wrath and in that they are poured out.

The plagues are termed the last, because in them God's judgments find full expression.

The words "filled up" in verse 1, means "completed": so these seven last plagues complete the pouring out of God's providential judgments. The judgments under the vials are consummated by the most devastating judgments under the Lamb—when He comes. clothed with supreme authority and rule, as is revealed in Chapter 19. 15. This sign in heaven John terms great and marvellous.

Then he beheld that which was like "a sea of glass mingled with fire," and the victorious and raptured saints who had conquered in their opposition to the Beast's demands were seen standing on this sea of glass, having the harps of God.

We discussed the symbolism of the sea of glass (see Chap. 4. 6) and pointed out that it stood for the Word of God which keeps the life clean. The sea of glass mingled with fire speaks of the fire of the Beast's persecution through which they had won their way. They could therefore as conquerors stand on that sea of glass and worship.

These sing the song of Moses the servant of God (Exod. 15) because they are delivered from the oppressor, of whom Pharaoh was a type, and they sing the song of the Lamb because by His blood they had gained their victory. They had won against the enemy with spiritual weapons. Verse 4 is an anticipative fulfilment of Isa. 66. 23.

Then the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony (witness) in heaven is opened. The tabernacle of the testimony was a place of grace to Israel, but now it becomes a place of judgment.

It was there in Israel where the high priest ministered on their behalf, but now the honour of Israel's covenant-keeping God must be vindicated, and the very instrument of mercy becomes the agent of wrath.

"The seven angels came out of the Temple having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (v. 6).

"Clothed in pure white linen" symbolized their work of carrying out of God's judgments as being in harmony with His righteous character. "The golden girdles at their breast" symbolized that "the wrath to be poured out was measured by the Holy nature of God." In this verse the "girdle" also suggests activity in service—not of grace, but of judgment.

"Then one of the four living creatures gave to these seven angels, seven golden vials (or bowls) full of God's wrath" (v. 7).

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power: and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

This is a solemn, awe-inspiring word. From the place where grace has been manifested, God now begins

to act in terrible judgment to completely vindicate His holy character and to answer the prayers of those who had been martyred under the tyranny and cruelty of the blasphemous Man of Sin. (Read again Chapter 6. 9-11 and Chapter 8. 3-5.)

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XV

192. **Sea of Glass** (v. 2).

Fixed state of purity and holiness. (Read discussion on Chapter 5. 6.)

193. **Mingled with Fire** (v. 2).

Describes the fiery persecution which they had suffered under the Beast during the awful tribulation period.

194. **Harps of God** (v. 2).

He is the source of all true worship and song. These with harps are the same harpers of Chapter 14. 2.

195. **Seven Golden Vials (Bowls)** (v. 7).

These bowls which were used in the Temple for pouring out drink offerings, are used, in figure, as vessels filled with God's wrath, which is poured out on the rejectors of His grace.

What a contrast this use of the bowls is compared with Chapter 5. 8.

Seven speaks of the completeness of these judgments. (See Significance of Numbers.)

196. **Smoke from the Glory of God** (v. 8).

There is evidence of fire in this expression, and fire is a symbol of judgment. God's grace is now hidden from men behind His consuming wrath, yet His glory is revealed in the righteous judgments which He is about to pour out on a Christ-rejecting world (see Isa. 6. 4).

197. **Temple** (vv. 5, 6, 8 twice).—God's immediate presence.

Chapter XVI

THE SEVEN VIALS POURED OUT

"A great voice was heard out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (v. 1).

IT will be noted that the temple vessels, used as a means of grace, are now to be used here as vessels of wrath.

Not without profit would it be to read the account of the plagues of Egypt and to compare these plagues of Chapter 16 with them; for as Pharaoh, the oppressor in Egypt, defied God and endeavoured to exterminate God's people during their sad sojourn there, so the arch-oppressor of God's people in a future day will defy God and try to crush them during the Great Tribulation on earth.

The First Vial Poured Out

It will be seen that there is much similarity between the judgments under the trumpets and under the vials, but the judgments under the trumpets were limited to the Roman world; while under the vials they cover the whole earth, and are more severe. And without doubt they take place near the end of the Great Tribulation.

The first plague corresponds to the sixth plague of Egypt (Exod. 9. 10-11).

The first vial was poured out

"Upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (v. 2).

This was a judgment for apostasy. It represents a corrupt condition as a result of their moral collapse, but it may be also to some extent a judgment of a physical character.

The word "earth" in verse 1 takes in the whole world, but as used in verse 2 it appears to represent the organized part of the earth, and is given in contrast to the word "sea" in verse 3, which represents the unorganized, chaotic mass of men.

The Second Vial Poured Out

The second and third plagues correspond somewhat to the first plague of Egypt (Exod. 7. 17-25).

"The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (v. 3).

The word "blood," as stated before, means spiritual and moral death.

The literal rendering is: "became blood, *as* of a dead man." This expression is well defined by Jude in verse 12. Speaking of ungodly men, he uses the term "twice dead." They are not only spiritually dead, but also blatant apostates.

No matter how little religious profession men have, the awful apostasy crushes out the last trace of it. There is not one left amongst them whose defection is not absolutely complete. (Compare with second trumpet Chapter 8. 8.) What an awful answer this is to the man who believes that everyone has a spark of the divine in him. If this were true, then that spark could not die; but under the second plague every vestige of profession dies right out.

This is the meaning of the words, "every living soul died in the sea." The word "sea" refers to the chaotic condition of mankind, which is the direct result of apostasy.

Rapidly the religious world is approaching this place of moral collapse. The awful apostasy of the last days is soon to come to a head.

The Third Vial Poured Out

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood" (v. 4).

Rivers and fountains of water represent all sources of progress and national well-being. Here they are seen to be so corrupted that they die morally. Compare Chapter 8. 10 with the place of the judgment under the third trumpet.

At this point "the angel of the waters" (peoples) declares that the Lord is righteous in so judging men's sin. "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets"—trampling under foot the blood of Calvary—"And Thou hast given them blood to drink for they are worthy" (they deserved this).

This means that they were made to know the awfulness of their moral death, and its judgment; for they had fully merited it.

Here John says: "I heard a voice from the Altar" (or *heard the altar say,* see marginal references), "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments."

You may recall that the appeal of the martyred band was made from under the altar in Chapter 6. 9-11. Here we have that brazen altar speaking.

"The brazen altar speaks." This is a significant expression. On this altar the sacrifices were offered to God which typified God's consuming wrath as seen on the Cross. God's demands of His saints were satisfied on God's altar; and because God's faithful ones had been sacrificed by the apostates therefore the altar speaks. It not only requests, but also declares the righteousness of God's judgments. Prayers are being answered and these acts of wrath vindicate God for they are retributive judgments.

The Fourth Vial Poured Out

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the *Sun;* and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire" (v. 8).

When we compare this with the judgment under the fourth trumpet (Chap. 12), we cannot but contrast the results.

"The Sun" in this judgment is the supreme authority on earth. Who or what is this? Already it has been pointed out that it is the revived Empire of Rome. (See remarks on Chapter 8. 12.)

Power is now given to this governing authority "to scorch men with fire," and they are burned with great heat.

The moral collapse has already come as we have seen, but the Roman Prince now becomes a tyrant of tyrants among men, and yet they do not repent toward God who has "power over these plagues"; on the contrary, they blaspheme His Name.

The Fifth Vial Poured Out

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat (throne) of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they (men) gnawed their tongues for pain" (v. 10).

Here is a plainer statement. The very throne of the awful beast—the head of the Roman Empire—is directly attacked, and the Kingdom plunged into the worst moral darkness.

The ninth plague of Egypt was literal and typical, while this is symbolic. The judgment under the fifth trumpet gives the reason for the judgment under the fifth vial, for they synchronize one with the other.

As under the fourth vial no repentance is produced by this plague.

Men are under such satanic deception, that though suffering such intense agony, they grope in their blindness for some alleviation from their terrors, but will not give up the iniquities which were responsible for the judgments. They now increase their sin, for in verse 9, they blasphemed the Name of God; but in this verse (21) they blaspheme God Himself.

It may be wise to recall here that the sealed servants of God in the time of the fifth trumpet remain untouched (Chap. 9. 4). God shows grace in the midst of wrath.

The Sixth Vial Poured Out

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the east might be prepared."

This judgment clearly synchronizes with the judgment under the sixth trumpet (Chap. 9. 13-21). The passages should be read together, for Chapter 16. 12-16 amplifies and completes the judgment of Chapter 9. 13-21. (For discussion on the great battle as described in Ezekiel 37 and 38 see "Great Northern Confederacy." [4])

The drying up of the Euphrates is looked upon by some to be the drying up of the Turkish power; but we do not consider that this is so, for Turkey and the confederacy of the north—Russia and Germany—will be allied in the day referred to in verse 12.

We believe that the reference is to a literal drying up of the river to allow the great Asiatic armies to march without hindrance against the promised land, of which the Euphrates is the eastern boundary (Gen. 15. 18).

The river is dried up that the way of "the Kings from (not 'of') the east" might be prepared. The literal rendering is, "the kings from the rising of the sun."

The east is already awakening. China, India, and Persia are rising into a new national consciousness. Japan has long risen into hers. The Sino-Japanese War will ultimately increase the national consciousness of China—for she is not yet beaten. Russia is still to be reckoned with: for at the end of the Great Tribulation, the Great Northern Confederacy, and the combined East, will unite in their attack on Palestine—the territory of the Beast. The east of the Euphrates will probably see before long, a vast host uniting in preparation for the fulfilment of verse 14.

It is interesting to note the term, "the rising of the sun," when we remember that Japan (even if crushed may be one of those in the eastern combination) is called by herself "the land of the rising sun."

We now come to a similar parenthetical portion between the sixth and seventh vials, as to those which occur between the sixth and seventh seals and the sixth and seventh trumpets.

"Three Unclean Spirits Like Frogs"

John now says:

"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet" (v. 13).

These "three unclean spirits" like slimy frogs represent the pestilential foulness from the moral chaos of the apostasy. They come out of the mouth, that is, the sources of this evil are the Dragon (Satan); the Beast (head of revived Roman Empire); and the False Prophet (Antichrist). See Chapter 13.

To show that this is a combination of the religious and of the political elements, we read that these are spirits of demons working signs. They control the kings of the whole earth and gather them for the battle which takes place on that great day of God Almighty (v. 14), and they are brought together into the place called in Hebrew "Armageddon" (v. 16). Armageddon is Mt. Megiddo in Palestine, where many great battles in history have been fought. Particulars of this conflict are given in Chapter 19. 17-21, also in Zechariah 14.

At this point it would be of profit to read carefully Luke 21. 25-27, and to compare the details stated there with those we have already examined in our study.

Why is verse 15, a parenthesis in a parenthesis, found in our chapter? Some declare that it is a proof that the church has not yet been raptured? But the Lord does not come to the church, composed as it is of His loved ones, as a *thief,* but as a Bridegroom for His bride.

No! This parenthesis is a word of cheer and hope, as well as of warning to the faithful remnant: for

when the sorrows announced take place they are but a proof that the manifestation in glory of their Lord is at hand.

An application may be made to us also of the warning to watch lest any see us brought to shame through our unfaithfulness. But primarily the warning is for the Lord's own who are then on earth—especially to the Jewish remnant in Palestine—where the nations are seen gathering to battle.

The Seventh Vial Poured Out

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the *air;* and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done" (v. 17).

We learn from Ephesians 2. 2 that "the air" is Satan's realm. He is called "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This verse may suggest to us that when the seventh vial was poured out into the air it was a destructive judgment on the moral life of every realm of society.

"The great voice out of the temple" (place of God's presence), "from the throne" (seat of God's governmental authority), said "It is done," meaning that the pouring out of this seventh vial sees the completion of God's wrath (similar to the climax which is reached when the stone of Daniel 2. 34, 44-48 strikes the image and completely shatters Gentile dominion). "Lightnings, voices and thunders," are signs of God's judicial dealings. (See remarks on Chapter 8. 5.)

Under the seventh trumpet there were lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake and a great hail; and under the seventh vial both the earthquake and the hail were exceedingly great.

It must again be noted that these are not happenings in nature but are definitely symbolic. They describe a complete collapse. All authority and organization of every kind — social, political, and religious — being broken up, the greatest revolution ever known is pictured before us.

In verse 19 we have two different objects of God's judgments. (1) The GREAT CITY, which is Political Rome, and (2) GREAT BABYLON, which is Ecclesiastical Rome. Political Rome—the whole of the Roman Empire—is divided into three parts, through some great upheaval as symbolized by the words in verse 8: "so mighty an earthquake, and so great." When this takes place, we read that "the cities of the nations fell." This refers to those centres, outside the Roman Empire, which will no doubt be connected with her in commerce. We can readily understand that when political Rome falls the cities of the nation fall with it. Verse 19 also states that "Great Babylon was remembered before God. This is the name for Ecclesiastical Rome, and those systems which come under her corrupting sway. God gives to her "the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath." (Her judgment is described in Chapter 17.) Every island fled (centres of commerce even though isolated) and the mountains (places of governmental authority) are removed (v. 20).

The hail out of heaven is described as great, each item weighing about a talent, a sudden terrific and overwhelming judgment is presented in this visitation. Men only blaspheme God the more.

What is given as a brief summary in verse 19 will be found developed in detail in Chapters 17 and 18.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XVI

198. **Bowls** (v. 1).—Vials.

The sacrificial bowls used in the Tabernacle and temple are now a symbol of judgment. What a warning this should be. (See Symbol 195.)

199. **To Pour Out Wrath** (v. 1).

Is an Old Testament expression; we have it in Psalm 69. 24 "Pour out thine indignation."

200. **Seven** (v. 1).—Completeness (see Significance of Numbers).

201. **Angel of the Waters** (v. 5).

Chapter 17. 15 states that "waters" symbolizes "peoples," "multitudes," or "nations." Therefore this expression refers to the peoples who are—through His angelic servants—under God's control.

202. **Blood to Drink** (v. 6).

Make them conscious that the wages of their sin is death. Compare Exodus 32. 20 where Moses made the Israelites drink of the water mixed with the powdered idol to make them conscious of the awfulness of their iniquity.

203. **Scorch Men with Fire** (v. 8).

Unbearable tyrannical persecution by the Beast—head of the Roman Empire—who is energized and controlled by Satan.

204. **Gnawed their Tongues for Pain** (R. V., v. 11).

Not used anywhere else in Scripture.

No sign of contrition whatever here. The expression which closely resembles this is in Luke 13. 28; Matt. 25. 30, etc.

205. **Mouth** (v. 13).—Used three times in this verse.

In the following Scriptures it is used as the origin and instrument of destruction.

(See Chap. 2. 16; 9. 17; 12. 15. God's mouth, see Isa. 11. 4; Chap. 1. 16.)

206. **Air** (v. 17).—The air is Satan's realm.

Life needs air to breathe, so the world's moral life was the object of the severest judgment.

Every realm of society found its moral life and all its moral principles destroyed. (See comments on verse.)

207. **Great Hail out of Heaven** (v. 21).

Some overwhelming judgment of great intensity which is of divine origin. "Hail" is used as a symbolic word in Isa. 28. 17: "The **hail** shall sweep away the refuge of lies."

Chapter XVII

THE DOOM OF THE WOMAN BABYLON

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."

THE Great Whore is the world's great spiritual adulterer. "Many waters," where the woman sitteth, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues which she controls.

She is now fully described. The kings of the earth (leaders of Christendom) have committed spiritual adultery with her. The world's inhabitants have drunk the cup of her apostasy.

"The wilderness" in verse 3 symbolizes the place where those who are thirsty can never be spiritually satisfied. It is a place of spiritual drought. The woman sits on the "scarlet coloured beast" (red is the dragon's colour—Chap. 12. 3), full of names (varied forms) of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns (v. 3).

This beast is easily identified. It is none other than the Roman Empire (Chap. 13. 1) controlled by the red dragon (Chap. 12. 3). Neither the horns nor heads are crowned as they are in Chapter 13. 1, because the woman completely controls the Empire for a brief period.

She is none other than religious Rome. Her clothing is purple and scarlet. (Mussolini, on Feb. 11, 1929, succeeded in securing complete sovereignty for the Pope, who is now King over "Vatican City.") This

position is clearly symbolized by the kingly colour "purple." The Roman Church colour is scarlet. The red caps of her cardinals point to this. And when the eucharistic congress was held in Chicago, the train carrying the Papal delegate and others, was painted red to represent the church colour. (For full discussion, see "The Resurrection of the Old Roman Empire." [2])

This woman is "decked with gold" (silver is now being replaced by gold in Papal worship); and "precious stones and pearls" are her treasures. She has a "golden cup" (a dazzling fascination) which is full of filthy indications of her fornication; verse 4 (corruption and idolatry). "Upon her forehead a name written" (public displayal of her name). "Mystery"—she is a great secret system. "Babylon the Great"—all her worship is a copy of the old Babylonian idolatry so cursed by God in the Old Testament. "Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth"—Men are seeking to unite all the religions of the world under one head. "The Movement of Faith and Order" and "The Fellowship of Faiths" are two organizations, having as their object the joining up of all religions with the Church of Rome. They believe that the lion will lie down with the lamb in peace. Yes! the lamb will be inside the lion. Read discussion on "Thyatira" (Chap. 2. 18-29); and see Symbol 44.

By the uniting of world religions with her she will become the "Mother" of harlots, and lead to the grossest apostasy, she being already an apostate herself. Is she not known to be "drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," as verse 6 declares?

John says he "wondered with great admiration" (wonder) and the angel said to him:

"Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns" (v. 7).

Following this we have the description of the woman and of the beast (vv. 8 to 18).

After the striking revelation given in the previous chapters, it will not be difficult to understand the contents of these verses. But before we examine verse 8, we may remind ourselves that John did not have *history* given to him, but a *revelation of prophecy*. It was history written before hand. As someone has put it, "It was *His* story." Parts of our chapter may be historical now to us, but it was prophecy to John: that is, a few details in the earlier portion may have been fulfilled since John's day, or may be in process of fulfilment today. But we must be on our guard lest we take the historicists' attitude, claiming that the whole of the Book of Revelation has been in process of fulfilment from John's day to our own. To avoid such a danger we will reiterate by saying that we have seen the beginning of the fulfilment of verses 2-5, and the minor fulfilment of the first portion of verse 6.

We use the word "minor," because of many prophecies there are both a minor and a major fulfilment, and sometimes the minor has been taken for the major, and has thus led to a false exegesis.

A *minor* fulfilment is seen in verse 6. Ecclesiastical Rome is drunk already with the martyrs of Jesus, but the *major* fulfilment is still future; for when the church is taken up this verse will be accomplished in all its demonical fury. The dark ages will be as the twilight

compared to the black midnight of the Great Tribulation period.

These remarks may help us to understand the exegesis of verses 8-18 which follows.

We now learn that

"The beast that thou sawest *was* and *is not*, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition."

"The beast was and is not." As we have seen, it represents the Roman Empire and was existing in John's day; but as he was writing for our day, and not for his own, we can readily understand these words, and say: "The Roman Empire *was* existing but *is not* now."

Considering Chapter 9. 11, we saw that the angel of the bottomless pit was Satan, and that he is the one who gives the Beast "his power, his throne, and great authority" (v. 2). The Beast rises out of the bottomless pit, but does not go into perdition until the time of Chapter 19. 20.

"Earth-dwellers" (v. 8)—but not God's elect—will wonder because of the Beast's Satanic power, and they will worship him (see Chap. 13. 3, 4). They will wonder when they behold the Beast that *"was* and *is not"* (Imperial Rome died A. D. 476) "and yet is" should be read "is yet to come."

(How the Fascists tried to prepare for the resurrection of this Roman Empire. See "Resurrection of Old Roman Empire." [2])

"Here is the mind that hath wisdom" (v. 9), which means, "Here is scope for the exercise of a mind that hath wisdom."

"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth."

If we connect verse 18 with verse 9 we will see that "the woman is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," and learning that it is a seven-hilled one, we see clearly that Rome is in view, for it is called to-day as it was called by the old Romans, "The city of seven hills."

"On the imperial medals of that age, which are still preserved, we see Rome figured as a woman on seven hills, precisely as she is represented in the apocalypse" *(Wadsworth)*.

Verses 10 and 11 need explanation.

The "seven Kings" refer to the seven distinct forms of government which characterised the Roman Empire from 32 B. C. to 476 A. D., namely, Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, Military Tribunes, and Imperial.

The first five forms had passed away before John was in Patmos. Julius Cæsar set up the Imperial form —the sixth—and it was existing under Domitian in John's day, continuing until the complete fall of the Empire in 476 A. D.

Thus in John's time that five forms of government in the Roman Empire had disappeared, that the imperial form was then existing, and that the other had not yet come. When he does come he must continue for a short space of time, he the seventh—the Beast—is to reign for but a brief period, of not more than seven years.

"The beast that was and is not—referring to verse 8—even he is the eighth, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition" (v. 11).

He is the seventh, as following the sixth. He will be seen copying Julius Cæsar, who set up the imperial form of Empire, but the form of government of the future Roman Empire will be an advance upon that of

Julius Cæsar: for the latter was Emperor of a single empire—which was not in any sense a federation; for the Beast will unite ten kingdoms, which will be severally controlled by ten kings, of which he will be the head.

But if he is "of the seven," how can he be called "the eighth"? The seventh is the imperial government, similar to that of Julius Cæsar, though in a ten-kingdom form. The Satanic diabolical head is "the eighth" (he now rules over a federation, which was never known in the previous history of the Roman Empire); but he is energized by the Dragon, and his rule over the old Roman territory is similar to the *imperial* control exercised by the seventh form of government, therefore, he is "of the seventh." Note that it is the eighth, the Beast as ruler, who goes into perdition; and not the Empire of which he is the head. (Daniel, Chapters 2 and 7, are discussed at length in "The Resurrection of the Old Roman Empire." [2])

When the Beast arises in power he heads a ten-kingdom federation, which is not yet in existence. The ten kings rise together and reign one hour with the Beast, which means they reign a very brief while (v. 12).

These ten have only one policy, and hand all authority to the Beast (v. 12). (Their battle with the Lamb is discussed in connection with Chapter 19.)

Is it not remarkable that southern Europe will soon prepare for a complete uniting of all the countries which were held by the old Empire of Rome! The international alliances and treaties which the Fascisti temporarily secured in furtherance of their aims to resurrect old Rome will ultimately be restored by

others, who will be Romans, but not necessarily Italians. Also the proposed "United States of Europe," as suggested by M. Briand of France—which has seen its beginning in the economic and industrial alliance of Britain and France, formed during the war in 1940—is speeding up the plans for the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy.

"The whore" reigns over many peoples, etc., as symbolized by "the waters" (v. 15).

"The ten horns" (that is ten kings—see verse 12) on the beast hate the whore, and unite in ruining her utterly, completely wiping her out. Garibaldi robbed her of her kingship—which Mussolini restored in 1929—but this Roman federation will band together and make her a social outcast. For, says verse 17:

> "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their Kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

The wickedness is already in the hearts of these kings and God gives them the desire to unite with the beast until His will is fulfilled. One can now ascertain why we have verse 18 at the end of the chapter.

It tells us that the woman is *that great city* which reigneth over (has kingly power over) the kings of the earth. By this we may know that the recent statement from Vatican City circles intimating that the Pope does not desire to be misunderstood by asserting his temporal power is merely deceptive talk. We know that the Word of God never deceives, for this religious system has always desired to be in control of the world's secular powers.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XVII

208. **Wine** (v. 2).

See Symbol 186, and comments on verse.

209. **Fornication** (v. 2).

See Symbol 45, and comments on verse.

210. **Gold, Precious Stones, and Pearls** (v. 4).

Making a vain pretence of possessing divine righteousness (gold), of glory (precious stones), and of beauty (pearls). See comments on verse.

211. **Abominations and Filthness of her Fornications** (v. 4).

Her unfaithfulness to God is seen in its worst phase in the use of Christianity as a cloak to cover up corrupting idolatry.

212. **Beast . . . Seven Heads and Ten Horns** (v. 7).

Also mentioned in verse 3. The same Beast of Chapter 13. 1.

213. **Ten Horns . . . Ten Kings** (v. 7).

The ten horns of Dan. 7. 24. The same as the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image in Dan. 2. 42, 44.

214. **Reigneth over the Kings of the Earth** (v. 18).

Holds authority over them. So important she is to-day in the minds of men, that going over to the Greek Church, or the English Church, is never expressed by the words, "going over to Greece or England"; but the term "going over to Rome" means uniting with the Roman Catholic Church.

214A. **Seven Mountains** (v. 9).

The word "mountain" is often used in Scripture as symbolic of a kingdom (see Symbol 96); but it is questionable whether it is so used here. It must be noted that though the word is used figuratively in Chapter 6. 14, it is used literally in Chapter 6. 15, 16.

In the verse we are now considering the word "mountains" is used literally, though we should not altogether rule out the figurative use.

Chapter XVIII

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven having great power; and the earth was lightened with glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen" (vv. 1, 2).

IN Chapter 17 we saw that the Beast and the ten kings united in destroying Babylon. In Chapter 18 there is no reference made to the Beast or to ten kings.

Chapter 17 indicates the human agents that God uses to destroy Babylon, while Chapter 18 shows that He alone is the author of the judgment.

Here we have revealed also the fact that when the Lord destroys her, His judgments come on the whole of Christendom, because they have united with the whore in her apostasy. (See comments on "mother of harlots" in Chap. 17. 5.)

The description of Babylon given by the angel is truly an awful one. It is called the home of demons, the stronghold (held by Satan as a fortress) of every kind of foul and hateful bird (birds that prey in the night).

All nations and kings of nations have joined her in spiritual adultery (unfaithfulness to God and Christ), and many have used her for personal gains (v. 3). So we may see to-day multitudes courting Rome's favour, and many politicians are pandering to her followers for their votes. A "voice from heaven" (place of God's presence) calls for men to separate from her and not to

partake in her adultery, otherwise they cannot avoid participating in her punishment (v. 4).

Her sins are piled up to heaven and God remembers them all (v. 5).

The call is to give her twice as much as she had given to others, so these judgments are retributive, in double measure (v. 6). Because she glorified herself in her luxury, reigned as queen, and denied that sorrow would ever come to her, therefore God freely gives her sorrow and woe (v. 7).

So in one day, death, mourning, and famine will come as plagues upon her, and "she shall be utterly burned with fire" (figure of complete destruction), for the Lord God is strong who judgeth her (v. 8).

Here is seen the prophetic picture of Babylon's destruction; and following upon it the sorrow of those who have increased in wealth and prestige by their association with her.

Babylon's Collapse and the Sorrows of Her Traffickers

The kings of the earth (whole earth) lament because they cannot live longer in luxury through her, and the merchants of the earth mourn because they cannot buy from her any more (vv. 9-11).

The list of articles of merchandise (twenty-eight in all) commences with gold and finishes with slaves and souls of men (v. 13). (Is it not true that Rome has a gluttony for gold, and also that she enslaves the bodies and souls of men?)

Shipmasters and crew, and sea-traders all bewail the loss of trade. Verses 9-19 containing a remarkable

series of statements showing the influence and wealth which Rome will acquire in the days soon to come.

Heaven Rejoices

All heaven is called upon to rejoice at the retributive judgment of God on Babylon (v. 20); and a mighty angel takes up a stone like a millstone and casts it into the sea, symbolizing Babylon's violent and irrecoverable fall.

In her would not be found any more music, crafts, industry (v. 22), light, joy in love (bridegroom and bride) because her sorceries (magic) deceived all nations, and God's own were slain by her (v. 24).

As we read this chapter we must feel impressed with the certainty of God's judgments upon Babylon, which we can see are to come so rapidly in the place of the prestige and power described in Chapter 17. And "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

Chapter 18 cannot describe Babylon of Mesopotamia, as some believe (though Isa. 13. 21-22 and Jer. 51 do rather suggest that ancient Babylon may be restored, and it is being attempted to-day) because literal Babylon was never in the old Empire of Rome; but Ecclesiastical Babylon in Chapters 17 and 18 is closely connected with the Beast of that Empire.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XVIII

215. **Another Angel (v. 1).**

One of very high order—probably Christ—who, on behalf of His suffering people, takes vengeance on this mighty system. The words, "And the earth was lightened with His glory," strongly suggest that He is our Lord." (See Symbol 104.)

216. **Babylon, etc.** (v. 2).

How remarkable is the similarity here (in reference to ecclesiastical Babylon) with Isaiah's prophecy of the destruction of old Babylon (Chap. 13. 21-22); though our chapter does not in any way suggest the ancient city of Mesopotamia.

217. **Has Fallen** (v. 2).

Her ruin depicted as an accomplished fact.

218. **The Habitation of Demons** (v. 2).

This religious system becomes the dwelling-place of demons whose real home is the Abyss.

219. **A Hold of Every Foul Spirit** (v. 2).

The foul and unclean spirits of the Abyss gather there. (The meaning of the word "Hold" is a "prison" where they are confined.)

220. **A Hold of Every Unclean and Hateful (Hated) Bird** (v. 2).

The destructive and corrupting personal agents of the Devil make their abode there. (Read Jeremiah 5. 27-31, where the Lord uses the word "birds" as a figure of hatefulness.)

221. **Come Out of Her, My People** (v. 4).

The Lord makes this last appeal—on the eve of Babylon's destruction—to any of His believing people who may be still connected with her.

222. **Lived Deliciously (Luxuriously)** (v. 7).

She has enjoyed the greatest luxuries that the world can produce.

223. **I sit as a Queen, am no Widow, see no Sorrow** (v. 7).

She has been publicly debased already by the ten kings, but she is still haughty, and expects to retrieve her loss. She knows not that she is about to be completely crushed by God's own hand.

224. **A Stone like a Great Millstone cast into the Sea** (v. 21).

This dramatic act figures the judgment as sudden, complete and irremediable. A similar action describes the judgment on old Babylon in Jeremiah 51. 60-64.

225. **In Her was Found, etc.** (v. 24).

Her murderous character is described here and in Chapter 17. 6. When God's time comes His judgment falls suddenly and unsparingly.

Chapter XIX

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB—AND THE DOOM OF THE BEASTS

"And after these things I heard ('as it were,' Revised Version) a great voice of much people in heaven saying Alleluia; Salvation and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God" (v. 1).

LET us note that four times this Hebrew word "Hallelujah" (Alleluia is the Greek spelling) is given in this brief passage (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6). In Hebrew it means "Praise Jehovah," or "Praise the Lord." And is used a great many times in the Psalms. The last three Psalms commence and end with it.

Verse one states that John "heard a great (loud) voice of much people (a great multitude) in heaven." This company sing the first two Hallelujahs in this chapter; and as they use the words, "hath avenged the blood of his servants (bondmen) at her hand," no doubt they are the martyrs who are slain during the tribulation persecutions.

In verse 4, the twenty-four elders (see Symbol 7) and the four living creatures utter the third hallelujah.

"The voice from the throne" (v. 5) calls on all the Lord's servants to praise God. Then the whole multitude of saints in heaven sing the fourth hallelujah, and praise the Lord God because He reigns as the Omnipotent One.

In the first seven verses heaven sings because the great opposer of the Lamb (Babylon) is brought low, God's Name is vindicated, the blood of the martyrs is

avenged, and the great whore is judged. This makes possible the marriage of the Lamb. While the great whore was reigning on earth as if she were the bride of the Lamb, the Lamb would not take to Himself His true bride in marriage; but when the whore is dealt with, the bride is revealed.

The marriage of the Lamb expresses the joy that He has in taking the bride to Himself. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53. 11). He will present the church "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27). These Scriptures quoted are fulfilled in the words of our chapter; "His wife (bride) hath made herself ready (v. 7), because the Judgment Seat of Christ will have already taken place" (2 Cor. 5. 10 and 1 Cor. 3. 12-15).

Who is the bride? It is the Church. The redeemed ones from Pentecost (when the Spirit was given as an Indweller—a special gift *to* and mark *of* the Church, Acts 2) to the rapture (1 Thess. 4. 17), which is the time of the removal not only of the saints, but also of the Holy Spirit, from the earth (2 Thess. 2. 7).

We have already pointed out that the twenty-four elders represent the whole of the redeemed saints of the Old and New Testaments. And we should notice that when the Church takes her position as the bride of the Lamb, "elders" are no longer mentioned. The last reference to them is in verse 4, when they join in the Hallelujahs of heaven.

"The bride has made herself ready." Because of God's grace, and as a reward for faithfulness (1 Cor. 3. 14) she was granted the joy of being clothed in fine

linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness (righteousnesses) of the saints. These are the righteous acts and ways of the saints. At the judgment seat of Christ the honour of such display will have been given. (See "The Judgment Seat of Christ." [6])

Some seem to think that Israel is the bride, and not the church; but this is not so. Israel is an earthly nation and will have earthly blessings in the day to come. She is not the bride. On the other hand, the Church is a heavenly company, the very body of Christ of which He is the head; therefore she has heavenly blessings.

Paul, writing to the Corinthian Church, says: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a *chaste virgin* to Christ." This is the picture in which Paul presents the church in Ephesians 5. 25-32; His body and His bride.

On the other hand, Israel is spoken of as the *divorced wife* of Jehovah; cast aside because of her unfaithfulness. She will be restored, however, but a restored wife of earth can never be the virgin bride of heaven. The High Priest could not take a divorced woman as his bride, she had to be a virgin (Lev. 21. 13, 14).

Is not the earthly High Priest a type of the heavenly High Priest? Surely the marriage relationship is a very important part of this typology; therefore, if the Aaronic High Priest dare not marry anyone but a virgin bride, then our heavenly High Priest—the great Antitype—could not look upon any as His heavenly bride, but the Church of the Living God, which He purchased with His own blood (2 Cor. 11. 2).

John now continues:

"And he saith unto me, Write, 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he saith unto me, 'These are the true sayings of God.'" (v. 9).

His instructions were to *write* the special word: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

This is not an appeal to sinners in this dispensation to accept Christ as Saviour, and so be included in the bride. The expression really is: "Blessed are those who receive an invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

These are friends of the Bridegroom, of whom John the Baptist said that he was one (John 3. 29).

Why are the elders no longer mentioned after verse 4? If they comprise the Old Testament and the New Testament saints, and the Church only includes those who are saved between Pentecost and the Rapture (see 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17); therefore when the bride is ready for the marriage, as is stated in verses 7 and 8, immediately the Lord speaks (verse 9) of the blessing to the invited guests—those who were saved prior to Pentecost. The name "elders" is not used again in the book, because the N. T. saints are now the bride, and the O. T. saints are the invited guests. This throws much light on the words, "That they without us should not be made complete." (Read Heb. 11. 39, 40.)

The nearest to the heart of the Bridegroom is the bride, but the "friends of the Bridegroom," not the friends of the bride, this expression showing that their position is one of great honour—are the Old Testament saints. These are the invited guests to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Those dying for their faith during the Tribulation period cannot be guests because their resurrection has not yet taken place (Rev. 20. 4). The company in Chapter 7. 14 are not included, because their number

cannot be completed until the Great Tribulation is over, while the marriage of the Lamb takes place before the Lord comes in glory. He will bring her (the bride) with Him when He comes to judge the nations, and to cast the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire.

John was about to worship the speaker, but he said:

"Do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (v. 10).

This last clause is beautifully put by Weymouth: "Testimony to Jesus is the spirit which underlies prophecy."

Christ's Coming in Power and Glory (vv. 11-16)

As soon as the marriage takes place, heaven is opened, and our Lord, as King of kings, and Lord of lords (v. 16) comes forth with the armies of heaven (v. 14; see also Luke 21. 27) who will be associated with Him in His rule. The overcomer is promised this blessing (cf. Chap. 2. 26, 27 with 19. 15).

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a *white* horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (v. 11).

The rider of the white horse in Chapter 6. 2 was unnamed; but this One is called Faithful and True.

He is the Lord. He judges and makes war in righteousness. His eyes are a flame of fire (R. V.). (He searches out every sin, and deals with it in judgment.) On His head are many diadems—not crowns (v. 12) (symbolizing supreme authority). Those of the Beast (Chap. 13. 1) represented usurped despotic power, but here on the Lord they mean that His righteous rule is absolute.

The word "many" (v. 12) would indicate that every kind of authority is now subject to Him.

The Lord has a name which is known only to Himself (compare Matt. 11. 27).

He is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood (v. 12). Not the blood of the Cross, but the blood of His enemies, for He is now coming in power and great glory to execute the wrath of God (Luke 21. 27).

His enemies having rejected Him and His salvation through His Cross, His *outer* garment is seen as dipped in their blood in righteous judgment (see Isa. 63. 3, 4).

His Name is called "The Word of God" (v. 13). In John 1. 1, 3, 14, we read: "In the beginning was the *Word*, the *Word* was with God and the *Word* was God. All things were made by Him." "And the *Word* became flesh and dwelt among us."

A word is one's expression of himself; so Christ was the expression of God Himself. When Christ came it was God who became incarnate in human flesh, the Word expressing the grace of God.

In verse 13 of our chapter Christ is viewed, in an absolute way, expressing God in judgment.

"The armies in heaven followed him" (v. 14). Their clothing declares them to be the same as the bride (church) of verse 8. The *white* horses symbolize power triumphant. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment" (Jude 14, 15), was Enoch's prophecy of this event. This and the prior event when the Lord calls for the Church (which take place between Chapters 3 and 4) take precedence of all other events in prophecy.

"Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword" (v. 15).

He speaks and it is done. (The expression is strikingly amplified in Isaiah 11. 4.)

"He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (v. 15). This expression, as we have noticed, is used of the man-child in Chapter 12. 5, where Christ was in view also.

"He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (v. 15). These words were employed in Chapter 15. 19, and have been commented upon already.

His name "King of kings and Lord of lords" (v. 16). This glorious name of supreme dignity and honour is written on His garment (outward character), and on His thigh (the place of the sword), showing that His title declares His victorious power and majesty.

The Battle of Armageddon

This is the conflict which is mentioned in Chapter 16. 13-16; Daniel 2. 44; 7. 26-27; Zechariah 14. 3; and many other Scriptures.

The angel is represented as standing in the sun. We have seen that Sun symbolizes supreme authority. In this case it speaks of the supreme authority of God Himself.

The angel calls to the vultures of the air to come and gather to the supper of the great God (v. 17).

The word "flesh" used five times in verse 18, gives a hint to the awful slaughter of these apostate armies of earth.

The prophet Ezekiel states that of the great Northern Confederacy alone five-sixths of them are slain (which comes some time later than the battle of the Armaged-

don), and that it will take seven months to bury the dead (Ezek. 39. 2, 14).

John says—

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gather together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (v. 19).

This describes in brief the battle of Armageddon. Then comes a concise statement of the facts which are given in detail in Chapter 13. (Specially read verses 1-5, 11, 14, 16, 17.)

"And the beast was taken (Roman Prince), and with him the false prophet (Antichrist) that wrought miracles before him (Roman Prince), with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image (see Chap. 14. 11). These both were cast alive into the lake of fire (here first mentioned in Scripture) burning with brimstone" (v. 20).

This is a place, and is not annihilation, for the Beast and False Prophet are still alive when the Devil is cast into the lake of fire 1,000 years later (Chap. 20. 11).

What a contrast is seen between the end of these two men and that of Enoch and Elijah. Not one of the four died physically. Two were cast alive into the lake of fire and two were caught away alive into the presence of God.

"*The remnant* (the rest of the kings and armies now bereft of their two leaders) *were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth* (He spake and it was done): *and all the fowls were filled with their flesh*" (v. 21).

Such is the awful ending of those who refuse to accept God's truth in Christ, and who accept the Devil's lie in the Antichrist.

Oh! I urge you, receive Him who died and rose again for us—before it be too late.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XIX

226. **After These Things** (v. 1).

After the things which are given in Chapters 17 and 18—the judgment of the great whore—all the saints in heaven rejoice with a great hallelujah (Heb. for "Praise ye Jehovah"), because of the righteousness of God's judgments (see Symbol 72).

227. **He hath Judged the Great Whore** (v. 2).

See comments on and Symbols in Chapter 18.

228. **A Voice of Many Waters, etc.** (v. 6). See Symbol 13.

229. **The True Sayings (Words) of God** (v. 9).

An emphatic way of stating that it is God Himself who has certainly spoken these important words of verses 1-9.

230. **A White Horse** (v. 11).

Victorious power. See comments on verse.

231. **Winepress** (v. 15).

See comments on Chapter 14. 19, and compare with Isaiah 63. 3. (Read Psa. 2. 9; 2 Thess. 2. 8.)

232. **Unto the Fowls, etc.** (vv. 17, 18).

A call to see the Lamb's victory at Armageddon.

Carefully read Ezekiel 39, which contains the same expressions in detail (especially verses 4, 17, 20). This battle is prophesied in Revelation 16. 13-16.

233. **The Beast** (v. 20).

The Roman Prince. The Beast of Chapter 13. 1-7.

234. **The False Prophet** (v. 20).

The Antichrist. The Beast of Chapter 13. 11. As the religious head of this trinity of evil, he has allured the nations to commit such vile and wicked idolatry that he is called "the False Prophet" in Chaps. 16. 13; 19. 20; 20. 10. This trinity of evil is associated together in Chaps. 16. 13; 20. 10.

235. **Fire and Brimstone** (v. 20).

A symbol of terrible torment (Chap. 14. 10).

The great Assyrian—the King of the North is stated to have the same judgment meted out to him (Isa. 30. 31-33).

Chapter XX

SATAN BOUND AND DOOMED

The Great White Throne Set Up

THE great Armageddon battle has been fought. Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords has defeated the enemy and the demon-possessed Beast and False Prophet; and these have been cast into the Lake of Fire.

Following this, we come to the remarkable twentieth chapter, which closes with a vivid description of the final judgment (vv. 11-15).

The chapter begins with the words:

> "And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit (abyss) and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (vv. 1-3).

This angel brings with him from God the key of the bottomless pit (out of which the Beast came, Chapter 17. 8) and a great chain in his hand.

The KEY and the CHAIN represent the supreme and mighty power of God over the pit.

THE DRAGON is the symbol of a cruel oppressor.

THAT OLD SERPENT is the subtle deceiver and tempter of Adam and Adam's race.

THE DEVIL describes his character: Satan is his personal name.

The angel lays hold of Satan and binds him 1,000 years—during the time of Christ's righteous reign over the earth (v. 2).

He casts him into the abyss, shuts him up, and seals the entrance, so that for 1,000 years the earth will be free from his deception. No doubt this will include the demons whom Satan loosed out of the pit (see comments on Chap. 9. 23).

At the end of this period he will be loosed for a brief season (vv. 3, 7).

Participators in Christ's 1,000 Years' Reign (vv. 4-6)

Three companies are presented in verse 4:

THE FIRST COMPANY. John beholds thrones which are occupied, and judgment is put into the hands of the occupiers (v. 4). Daniel foresees this in vision (Chap. 7. 9-10). Who are these that are seated on the thrones and to whom judgment is deputed? These are the twenty-four elders referred to in Chapter 4. 4 as enthroned and crowned, who represent all the redeemed saints from Abel to the rapture of the Church. Does not Paul write to the Corinthian church that the saints shall judge the world and angels? (1 Cor. 6. 2-3).

THE SECOND COMPANY that John sees are the souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God. These are the ones referred to as under the altar, who were slain soon after the taking up of the church (chap. 6. 9).

THE THIRD COMPANY which the Seer views are "The souls of those who had not worshipped the Beast,

neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their right hands."

This takes our thoughts back to the Antichrist's tyranny and persecution under his religious and industrial boycott (Chapter 13. 15-17).

Who are these in this third company? They have already been seen in Chapter 7. 9-17. They are the great martyred Gentile company "who come out of the Great Tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v. 14).

All in these three companies "live and reign with Christ a thousand years" (v. 4). This reign of Christ over the earth has been prophesied abundantly in the Old Testament Scriptures, but only now here is its duration given. It is a reign of 1,000 years, often spoken of as the millennium.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (vv. 5, 6).

Here we are taught that there is a *second* death, in contrast to the first resurrection. The ungodly dead have no part in the first resurrection (which takes place prior to the millennium), but they will be raised for judgment at the Great White Throne (vv. 12, 13).

The *first resurrection* comprises all those who are raised at the rapture, as well as those who are raised after the great tribulation. The latter really being the completion of this resurrection of life. Those who have part in the first resurrection are "blessed and holy," and the second death has no power over them, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him 1,000 years.

How wonderful is God's graciousness seen in the fact that the saints of the second and third companies are to have such close association in the millennial reign with the bride of the Lamb, and the friends of the Bridegroom; for they are all to be *priests* of God and of Christ, and are to reign with Him a thousand years. What blessings are to be theirs, as a reward for faithfulness even unto death.

"The anticipated praise of Chapter 11. 15 is now realized: the kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ."

The Loosing of Satan (vv. 7-9)

As soon as the millennium is finished Satan is loosed out of his prison (v. 7) (the bottomless pit, see verse 3). And he will

> "Go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sands of the sea" (v. 8).

These names, "Gog and Magog," must not be confused with "Gog and Magog" referred to in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The prophecies in those chapters take place *before* the millennium, while the prophetic scene in verse 8 is fulfilled *after* the 1,000 years' reign. The former is confined to certain nations (literal names of places and people); but the latter (v. 8) comprises the whole world. "Gog" means "multitude." It is used symbolically in the Book of Revelation.

Even a 1,000 years of righteous rule under Christ will not change the hearts of those of the Gentile nations, many of whom will have only feigned subjection to Him when He sets up His kingdom.

This is what the Psalmist writes, when he prophesies

of the millennial reign: "Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves (feign obedience) unto Thee."

Scripture clearly reveals the truth of Israel's salvation during this glorious period. Isaiah 50. 20-21; Ezekiel 39. 29; Romans 11. 26, are but three of many passages showing this.

The population will increase greatly because of the removal of the curse upon the earth; for wars, sicknesses, physical disturbances (earthquakes, cyclones, etc.), and epidemics generally will be unknown. Though plagues and droughts will be sent upon nations who refuse to worship (Zech. 14. 18), (and Isaiah 66. 23, 24 prophesies that open sin will be immediatelv punished with death), Satan will gather the nations together to battle in number "as the sand of the sea" (a symbol of vast multitude) and coming from all quarters of the earth.

"And they went upon the whole breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city (Jerusalem) and fire came down out of heaven and devoured them" (v. 10).

Now that the final gathering of the nations for war against God has been defeated, the great deceiver—the Devil—is "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and False Prophet are" (and have been for 1,000 years, Chapter 19. 20), "and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (for the ages of ages, a term meaning a never-ending eternity).

The Great White Throne (vv. 11-15)

A remarkable vision of the final judgment is now seen.

There is a great white throne, and the earth and the

heaven flee away from the face of Him that sits upon in (v. 11), making room for the new heaven and the new earth.

The One who sits upon that throne is our Lord, for "All judgment has been committed unto the Son" (John 5. 22).

The dead, both small and great, stand before this throne, and the books recording the individual responsibility of each and all are opened. The book of life is also opened to show that their names are not written therein. These "dead" were never children of God. If they had been, the judgment for them would have been a thing of the past and their presence before the great white throne would never have been required, for believers will never come into judgment.

"The dead" are "judged out of the things written in the books according to their works" (v. 12). From this dread judgment there is no appeal—death. The verdict is just and eternal.

In Matthew 25. 31, which prophesies the judgment of the nations, there are no dead present. In Rev. 19. 11-21, it is against living persons; but in Rev. 20. 11-15, only the dead appear before the Great White Throne, for it is not a universal judgment.

In Matthew 25 that judgment takes place *before* the millennium (1,000 years' reign); and the sheep are commended by the Lord. The judgment throne of our chapter (Rev. 20) is set up *after* the millennium; and those who come before it do not have a spark of hope.

The sea gives up its dead, and death and Hades deliver up their dead.

The word "sea" used here cannot refer to the literal sea, or the contrasting word "land" would be used.

The word "sea" in other parts of Revelation symbolizes unsettled condition of mankind; but in the verse we are now considering, it is connected with the word "dead." "The sea gave up the dead which were in it." It is therefore an expression which really means: "the tomb of buried nations."

If the sea holds the body and Hades the soul and spirit, then the meaning is clear for body, soul, and spirit will be united once more, for the purpose of this final judgment.

Then death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire. Not one is freed. This is the second death.

The second death is not annihilation, the last clause of Chapter 20. 10 proving this, for "they shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages," which, as has been pointed out already, is a term representing eternity. *Death* is never annihilation. The soul never dies and never sleeps. Sleep is always connected with the body alone.

The soul of the sinner is separated from God on account of sin even now, and if the sinner does not receive the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of the soul, that separation of the soul from God will be eternal.

The great answer of our Lord as to the justice of this condemnation is given in verse 15.

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

This is opened as a proof that not one name of those who come before the Great White Throne is written therein. The Throne is not set up to pronounce judgment, but to carry out the sentence already declared (John 3. 18).

The solemn written truth of this chapter ought to make the reader ask seriously: "Is my name written in the book of life?"

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XX

236. **Key** (v. 1).

Competent authority. See comments on this verse and on Chapter 9. 2, where the key is used to open the bottomless pit, and here to close it. (See also Symbol 117.)

237. **Bottomless Pit,** Abyss (v. 1).

Found nine times in the New Testament. (Seven times in Revelation.) (See Symbol 118.)

238. **Satan** (v. 2).

The Arch-deceiver of men and nations. Named Lucifer (Morning Star), was a beautiful angelic being, who fell through pride (Isa. 14. 12*f.f.*). The Lord calls him a liar, and the father of it (John 8. 44); and his doom is included in the prophecy of Isa. 24. 21, 22. This doom will no doubt include that of the demons whom Satan loosed out of the Pit. (See comments on Chap. 9. 23.)

239. **Thousand Years** (v. 4).

Called the Millennium from the Latin word *Mille* (1000) and *Annus* (a year).

240. **First Resurrection** (v. 6).

All those raised from the dead prior to the Millennial reign of Christ, are partakers of the first resurrection. This means that it is a resurrection unto life, and is in more than one stage. (See comments on verse.)

241. **Sand of the Sea** (v. 8). See Symbol 161.

242. **Great White Throne** (v. 11).

After the 1000 years' reign a judgment throne set up for the final dealing with sin, this, though, is only of a temporary nature.

White symbolizes the righteousness of the judgments of the one sitting there.

243. **Earth and Heaven Flee Away** (v. 11).—Not annihilation. This is remarkably described in 2 Peter 3. 13.

244. **Book of Life** (v. 15).

The record in which the names of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are written. (See Chaps. 13. 8; 17. 8).

Chapter XXI

THE OLD GIVES PLACE TO THE NEW

"For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea" (v. 1).

A NEW heaven and a new earth" is now in view. The removal of the old is prophesied in Chapter 20. 11. (The account of the passing away of it may be read in greater detail in 2 Peter 3. 10-13.)

The old heaven and the old earth are not annihilated. Chapter 20. 11 states: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven *fled away:* and there was found no place for them." The Apostle Paul wrote: "The *fashion* of this world passeth away." Peter, after he has stated: "The elements shall melt with fervent heat," says: "*the works* that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3. 10).

Again we read: "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved . . . nevertheless . . . we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth *righteousness*" (vv. 12, 13).

Fire here is a symbol of purification, and not a symbol of annihilation. It must be noted that Peter already has stated in regard to the Noachic flood: "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water *perished*" (2 Pet. 3. 6). The world was not annihilated. Then he says: "The heavens and the earth which are now . . . reserved unto fire against the day of

judgment and perdition (destruction) of ungodly men" (v. 7).

These Scriptures certainly show that the *new* heaven and the *new* earth are symbolic of the *old,* which is to be cleansed from all that defileth. This is also confirmed in Isaiah 65. 17, 18.

The new heaven is to be the abode of the redeemed saints in glory, and the new earth the abode of the redeemed ones who are saved during the tribulation period and who are on earth during the 1,000 years' reign.

"No more sea." The word "sea" is typical of the restlessness and destructiveness of the wicked. The words "no more sea" may also be understood literally, suggesting that land surface is greatly extended.

Then we read of

> "The Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a *bride* adorned for her husband" (v. 2).

This is beautifully descriptive of the church which is similarly referred to in Chapter 3. 12.

Eternal Glory Portrayed (vv. 2-6)

The millennium is finished, sin has been judged, and now the glory of our Lord's conquest is seen. The bride dressed in her bridal robes comes out of heaven. May we again quote, "He sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied."

Now that Adam's curse has been removed, God can come and dwell with men. So a great voice out of heaven declares that God now will tabernacle with men (He will dwell with them), they will be His people, and He will be their God. He will wipe away all tears

from their eyes, and death, sorrow and pain will all be removed, for the old things will give place to the new.

"And He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold I make all things new.' And He said unto me, 'Write: for these words are true and faithful.' And He said unto me, '*It is done.* I am Alpha and Omega'" (see Chap. 1. 8).

All is fulfilled and fixed for eternity.

Words of comfort and cheer for the faithful of our day are added, and a solemn word of warning to the wicked also.

The faithful one will rejoice in that day in his vast inheritance in Christ, but the wicked ones (the liar is included in the list given) shall have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death (see 1 Cor. 6. 9-10; Gal. 5. 19-21).

Gracious indeed is our Lord to make another appeal to the hearts of men, as He says, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." He will satisfy the thirsty soul with salvation. It is God's gift (also Chap. 22. 7). It is just like Him. He is "not willing that any should perish."

Millennial Glory Pictured (vv. 9-27)

One of the seven angels which has the seven vials full of the seven last plagues—the same one who showed Babylon and her judgment to John—walked with him and said, "Come hither and I will show thee the bride the Lamb's wife."

This statement of the angel clearly indicates that the vision in verses 9-27 comes prior to that which is seen in verses 2-6. The latter is a picture of the eternal state and is post-millennial, while the former is a prophetic scene of the millennium itself.

John was carried at once in the spirit to a great and high mountain and was shown "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (v. 10).

The bride is here pictured as a city coming down with the bridegroom to take her place in the millennial reign: though many features given of the bride in this chapter are eternal.

She is then described in her beauty as having the glory of God, that is, being entirely suitable in likeness to Himself—

"Her light was like a most precious stone, and a crystal—like jasper stone" (v. 12).

On this passage we will quote the following beautiful comment:

"In the glory of God the city shines, that glory is her light. The harlot shone in the glory of man. The bride stands in the glory of God. In herself she is destitute of beauty. She shines only in the glory of Another. . . . But the jasper and the sardius remarkable for their brilliancy set forth the glory and the majesty of God on His throne (Chap. 4. 3). There are three lists of precious stones which set forth the communicable glory of God. In *creation* (Ezek. 28. 13), in which the jasper is named sixth in the list; in *grace* (Exod. 28. 17-20) the jasper is last mentioned; in *government* (Rev. 21. 19, 20) the jasper is first named. The jasper is also mentioned three times in the detailed description of the heavenly city; first as her light (v. 11); second, as her security (v. 18); third, as the first foundation of the wall (v. 19). Thus the glory of God is the light, the security, and the foundation of the glorified church" *(W. Scott)*.

This symbolic city has a great high wall, which denotes separation and security.

Twelve is the number of governmental perfection in relation to the earth, and six times that number is mentioned in this chapter. The names of the twelve tribes inscribed on the twelve gates indicate the church's governmental relation to Israel in the millennial age. "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19. 28).

The Twelve Foundations

The twelve foundations have inscribed in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14). This is well explained in Ephesians 2. 19-20. "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone."

Its measurements are typical of perfection, and its size and beauty are beyond comparison.

The foundations are:

"Garnished with all manner of precious stones" (vv. 19-20).

The first, *jasper*—most beautiful and differing in colour.

The second, *sapphire*—blue.

The third, *chalcedony*—grey—with purple, blue and yellow.

The fourth, *emerald*—green.

The fifth, *sardonyx*—a mixture of the sardius and onyx.

The sixth, *sardius*—blood-red.

The seventh, *chrysolite*—gold-stone.

The eighth, *beryl*—transparent, sea-green.

The ninth, *topaz*—golden.

The tenth, *chrysoprasus*—bluish hue, beautiful green with yellow mixture.

The eleventh, *jacinth*—violet.

The twelfth, *amethyst*—purple.

This list gives some idea of the all various beauty of the foundations—all the stones portraying God's glory.

It is to be noticed that the *sardius*—the only blood-red stone of the twelve—was the first in the breastplate of the high priest (Exod. 28. 17), typifying the fact that the unexcelled glory of the Lord—as seen in the jasper—could not be revealed except through the glory of our Lord's redemptive work—as expressed in the sardius. Revelation 4. 3 reveals the truth that the glory of the one on the throne was like a jasper and a sardius.

These stones are given in the reverse order of Exodus 28. 17, because we see in Revelation 4. 3 that the unexcelled glory of God (as seen in the jasper) shines out in its brilliancy and wonder through the redemptive work of the Lamb, which is symbolized by the sardius, the only blood-red stone of the twelve.

In our chapter the first foundation was jasper, and the sixth was sardius, because the first thing seen in the church of Jesus Christ is God's glory (jasper) only because in the centre of all is the completed work of Calvary (as symbolized by the sardius).

The Gates

"The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each gate was one pearl" (v. 21).

Our minds are taken back to the sixth parable of Matthew 13. 45-46. "The merchant man (the Lord) seeking goodly pearls; Who, when He had found *one*

pearl of great price, went and sold all that He had, and bought it."

Our blessed Lord loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5. 25).

The City—The Church

"The city was pure gold like clear (transparent) glass" and "The street of the city was pure gold like transparent glass" (vv. 18, 21).

Gold symbolizes divine righteousness, while "like as transparent glass" speaks of the reflection of the glory.

The church itself is the display of divine righteousness. She is the living glorified expression of divine righteousness. "The street (not streets) of pure gold like transparent glass." Not only will the church itself reflect the glory of divine righteousness, but her walk and ways will agree therewith.

John sees no temple therein, for we have free access to God. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (v. 22).

The city does not need the sun (created light) or the moon (derived light) for God's glory lightens it and the Lamb is the light thereof (v. 23). "He was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1. 9).

As God's glory is only manifested through the Lamb therefore it is only as the Lord is revealed through the city (church) as the light thereof, that nations which are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour *unto* it—not *into* it (vv. 23, 24). This shows that the nations give joint homage to Christ and to His bride.

All this, as before noted, is a millennial scene. The

sun will never set on this glorified church's horizon. There will be no night in her and her gates will not be closed, which typifies perfect security and intercourse (v. 25).

Verse 27 intimates that this glorified church is perfectly pure and spotless now. "When we see Him we shall be like Him" (2 Cor. 3. 18; 1 John 3. 2). Christ has presented it to Himself a glorious church "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27), and that only those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life prior to the rapture are in it.

What an entrancing picture of the church's glorification. It will be radiant in Christ's beauty then. May we seek to be more like Him now.

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XXI

245. **New Heaven and New Earth** (v. 1).—See Isaiah 65. 17.

Specially made for the eternal abode of the saints. The new earth, therefore, is the abode of Redeemed Israel and the saved nations. (See comments on verse.)

246. **Wipe Away all Tears** (v. 4).—Prophesied in Isa. 25. 8.

247. **Former Things are Passed Away** (v. 4).

Verses 1-6a are describing an eternal scene which follows the millenium. Verses 6b-7 contain a final appeal of grace and a promise to the overcomer; and verse 8 gives a warning to those who are persistently wicked. Verses 9-27 describe a millennial scene; therefore chronologically verses 9-27 precede verses 1-8.

248. **It is Done** (v. 6).

All is fulfilled and fixed for eternity. When redemption through Christ has fulfilled to the letter all that God has willed, the prophecies of 1 Cor. 15. 24-28 will be realized: Christ having completely subdued—through His redemptive work—all enemies (the last enemy being death); then He delivers up all to the Father, and God will be all in all.

249. **Alpha and Omega** (v. 6). See Symbol 6.

250. **The Bride, the Lamb's Wife** (v. 9).
The Church. (See comments on verse.)

251. **A Great and High Mountain** (v. 10).
Symbolism often used in Scripture.

252. **That Great City, the Holy Jerusalem** (v. 10).
The Church. It is not strange for the Church to be described as a city: for she is called a building with stones in Eph. 2. 20; and in 1 Cor. 3. 9 as living stones; and a spiritual house in 1 Peter 2. 5. The bride makes two descents, first in verse 10, and second in verse 2.

253. **A Golden Reed** (v. 15).
Ezekiel had a measuring reed (Chap. 40. 3), which was suitable for an earthly city; but in our verse it is a golden reed (gold is symbolical of divine righteousness). Here the reed is only suitable for God's dwelling-place. Ezekiel's city had earthly connections, while this city (Bride) has heavenly connections.

254. **Measure, etc.** (v. 15).
A sign of God's ownership (see Chap. 3).
On the beautiful symbols of this chapter (see comments already given in Chapter 21).

255. **City—Length and Breadth** (v. 16).
A perfect cube—heavenly symmetry. Not suitable for earth; therefore could not possibly describe an earthly city. It could not be for human abode, for its size and shape proves it to be symbolic.

256. **City was Pure Gold** (v. 18).
Gold speaks of divine righteousness. The bride is partaker of His divine nature (2 Peter 1. 4). His righteousness is hers.

257. **Foundations of Precious Stones** (vv. 18-20).
See extensive comments on these verses.

258. **The Lamb's Book of Life** (v. 27).
The Book of Life of the Lamb. It only contains the names of those who have put their trust in Him and are redeemed by His precious blood. Only mentioned four times in Rev., Chaps. 13. 8; 17. 8; 20. 15 (name "Lamb" omitted here); 21. 27. See contrast "Book of Life's Profession." Symbol 5.

Chapter XXII

THE BRIDE—THE RIVER OF LIFE

THE opening verses (1-5) complete the description of the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

The expression in Chapter 21. 10, "I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," could correctly be used as a beginning to Chapter 22; for here we have the second description of the bride—the holy Jerusalem—and a continuation of millennial scenes which end with verse 5.

In Chapter 21. 10 John was shown a city, and in 22. 1 he is shown a river; but the figure of the city is still in the background of verses 1 to 5.

"He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (v. 1).

This typifies the church's cup of joy as overflowing, the source of it all being the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Many earthly things are fashioned according to the heavenly. The tabernacle was after the heavenly pattern (Heb. 8. 5). Ezekiel prophesied of earthly things which correspond to the verses we are now considering: for both speak of a river which apply to the millennial age; but the source from which each springs determines the character of the blessings. Also while the terms used in connection with the heavenly city are symbolic, Ezekiel's are literal.

An examination of the similarities and contrasts seen in comparing Rev. 20 with Ezekiel 47 will more fully elucidate these truths; but we must keep in mind that

the descriptions of the heavenly city in our chapter are symbolisms, while those prophecies of Ezekiel are real and literal.

The river of the water of life in our chapter proceeds from *the throne* (therefore is as pure as He is) to the millennial earth to give blessing to men (v. 1). Ezekiel's river issues from under the threshold of *the temple* eastward (47. 1; see Zech. 14. 8).

In the heavenly city, there are 12 kinds of fruit with a monthly harvest. The "*fruit* is for the saints, but the *leaves* are for the healing of the nations" (v. 2). Ezekiel's river heals the waters of the Dead Sea (v. 8); trees are for meat and the leaf is for medicine (v. 12). (On Ezek. 47, see "The Remarkable Jew." [1]).

The heavenly Jerusalem is the centre of blessing to the whole world, while the earthly Jerusalem in the millennial age is the centre of blessing to Israel; and other nations are compelled to come there to worship (Zech. 14. 16-21).

In the heavenly Jerusalem there is only one tree—the tree of life—for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was in the Garden of Eden, is destroyed by the Cross.

In the heavenly city there is "no more curse" (the church is perfect in holiness); God's name is in their forehead (a sign of ownership and security); and there is no night there, for the Lord God giveth them light.

But on the millennial earth there will be "curse" because sin will still be present (Isa. 65. 20; 66. 24); and they will be shielded from the heat of the sun (Rev. 7. 17). This latter Scripture shows that the sun will be there, but God will "spread His tabernacle over them"

(lit. rend., 7. 17). This is also clearly prophesied in Isaiah 4. 5, 6; 49. 10.

What a contrast we have to the paradise in Eden. Sin came in Eden and ruined the creation, but sin can never enter into this, the paradise (pleasure gardens) of God.

The tree of life sustains man; but the river of life gladdens his heart. We turned away from Him once, but soon we shall see His face, and His Name will be written in our forehead. We shall have His moral likeness, for when we see Him we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3. 2).

The redeemed host—because He ever lives—will never cease to reign (v. 5).

The Final Word (vv. 6-21)

These things are written that we—His servants—might know what will speedily come to pass (v. 6).

Because the Lord is coming soon, great blessing is the reward of him that keeps and values the sayings of the prophecy of this book (v. 7, and Chap. 1. 3).

John was so overcome by the greatness of the revelation that he fell down to worship the messenger, but is told again not to do so. There is only one to be worshipped—God Himself (v. 9). Worshipping of angels, or saints, is directly condemned in this verse (see Chap. 19. 10; Col. 2. 18).

The command comes to John that the book is not to be sealed because the time of fulfilment is near (v. 10).

Verse 11 deals with the permanency of all conditions when Christ has come.

This does not mean when He calls for His church into the air (1 Thess. 4. 16-18), which takes place prior to the tribulation period, seven years before the millen-

nium begins: but it has reference to the time when He comes with His saints for blessing to the faithful ones; judgment on the wicked; and to set up His millennial reign.

Then whether one is righteous or unrighteous, one's character and destiny will be immutably fixed. At that time (it is the Lord Himself, not the angel, who is now speaking) He will bring His reward with Him and every man will receive according to the degree of his faithfulness. (See "The Judgment Seat of Christ." [6])

Our Lord uses again the titles "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," which He did at the beginning of Revelation and in Chapter 21. He assumes and confirms everything. (See discussion on Chap. 1. 8.)

Verse 14 should be read as follows:

> "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the city."

Only the redeemed ones have the right to enter into the blessings of eternal life. Those outside are dogs (false teachers), sorcerers (spiritists), whoremongers (fornicators and adulterers), murderers, idolaters, and the liar (v. 15).

"I, Jesus"—it is the revelation of Himself that we have in this Book—"have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches" (v. 16). John had been told to "write and send it to the churches" (Chap. 1. 11).

How foolish then it is of men to slight or reject this volume of inspiration on the plea that it cannot be understood.

To Israel, Christ is "the Root and Offspring of

David." To the Bride, He is "the Bright and Morning Star" (v. 16).

That He is both the "Root" and the "Offspring" of David is strikingly given by Isaiah and our Lord. Isa. 11. 1 states: "And there shall come forth a *Rod* out of the *stem* of Jesse, and a *Branch* shall grow out of His *roots.*"

Christ also asked the Pharisees a question about Himself in the words: "If David then called Him Lord, how is He his Son?" (Read Matt. 22. 41-46.)

In these two quotations the words "Stem" and "Roots" are synonymous with "Root" in our text; and they express His divinity; but the words "Rod" and "Branch" are synonymous with "Offspring" in our text, and they definitely refer to His humanity. (See Symbol 265.)

Now one of the most appealing Gospel invitations in the whole Word of God is given, and it is the last. It does not leave out any willing soul.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (v. 17).

The keyword to the whole Bible is "Come." It is first used in Gen. 7. 1.

But then follows one of the most solemn warnings in the Scriptures.

"For I"—says the Lord—"testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book (tree) of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (vv. 18, 19).

Such serious words should make men hesitate in assuming a hostile attitude toward this book. Alas! how many despise it! Alas! how many ridicule it! The Lord's admonition should suffice to turn men's hostility to it, into earnest searching of its contents and not be influenced to believe in the heresy of universal salvation, or the Satanic theory of a second chance for those who in this life reject the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

If "The Revelation" was not of the first importance, why is such blessing promised to its reader, and such warnings uttered against its despiser? Let us individually answer this question.

The last glorious promise of inspiration is given in verse 20: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

"Amen," says John, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

May we heartily join in this response of John, noticing too that the book closes with a benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen" (v. 21).

SYMBOLS IN CHAPTER XXII

259. **River of Water of Life** (v. 1).

Water of Life means life in its fulness.

River symbolizes pleasure (Psa. 36. 8). No life could be fuller and no pleasure could be more complete.

260. **Clear as Crystal** (v. 1).—See comments on Chapter 4. 6.

261. **Tree of Life** (v. 2).

First mentioned by Moses. (See comments on this and following verses, also Symbol 23.)

262. **The Lord God of the Holy Prophets** (v. 6).

Lit. rendering: "The Lord God of the spirits of the prophets." This means that all the experiences and hopes of the prophets were altogether guided and controlled by Him.

"These are faithful and true sayings" (v. 6), for all those prophecies of the Old Testament which have their fulfilment in this Revelation—which is the book of consummation—were entirely inspired by Him; and it is He who sent His angel to show John the fulfilments which must soon come to pass.

263. **Seal Not** (v. 10).

To be open and understood (Chap. 1. 3).

The book of Daniel was to be sealed until the time of the end (to-day) (Dan. 12. 4).

264. **That Do His Commandments** (v. 14).

This should read, "That wash their robes." Accepting Christ as Saviour, their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb.

265. **Root and Offspring of David** (v. 16).

The Lord says, **"I, Jesus"** have sent Mine angel: **"I am."**

It is well put by W. Scott: "The 'I' is emphatic, His connection with Israel in royalty is here asserted. As divine, He is the root of David's house. As man, He is the offspring of David. He is David's Lord and David's son. The crown of Israel is His in virtue of Who He is, and His, too, by promise and prophecy."

266. **Bright and Morning Star** (v. 16).—See Symbol **51.**

267. **Spirit** (v. 17).—Holy Spirit.

268. **Bride** (v. 17).—The Church.

She gladly joins this last appeal.

269. **Book of this Prophecy** (v. 19).

There is no doubt but that this expression primarily refers to the Book of Revelation, but I believe that it has definite and specific reference to the whole Word of God—of sixty-six books—of which the Revelation is the last portion (or book).

The curses are therefore pronounced upon anyone tampering with any portion of the Sacred Scriptures, or refusing to believe its teachings and warnings. Man is warned not to be a critic of the Word of God, but the Word of God is to be the critic of man. "A discerner (critic) of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4. 12).

270. **Book of Life** (v. 19).

Revised Version, **"Tree of Life."**
(See comments on verse 2 and Symbol 21.)

271. **I Come Quickly** (v. 16).

The word "Come" occurs about 1900 times in the Scriptures. The first "Come" is in Genesis 7. 1, when God calls the faithful eight into the Ark for Salvation. This is the last and most glorious "come" of all the book. The Lord closes the Wonders of this Unveiling with the promise, "Surely, I come quickly." These are His last words until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, and we see Him face to face.

In this day of sadness Oh! the joy that can be ours. Though everything on earth is full of unrest we can have the peace of God garrisoning our hearts through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4. 7).

272. **The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the Saints** (v. 21).

As the world's night darkens, His grace will surely be with us (Matt. 28. 20).

He never will fail us. Though clouds may gather around us, praise His Name, we shall soon be caught up in **"the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16-17).

In the little while between by God's grace we will trust and not be afraid.

To the one who has read this book and is not yet the Lord's, may we remind you that the unbeliever is in the list of those who are punished with the second death. Verse 17 is God's final appeal to you.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Thank God **"Whosoever"** means **"YOU."**

[1] "The Remarkable Jew," by L. Sale-Harrison.

[2] "The Resurrection of the Old Roman Empire," by L. Sale-Harrison.

[3] "The Anglo-Saxon Nation," by L. Sale-Harrison.

[4] "The Coming Great Northern Confederacy," by L. Sale-Harrison.

[5] "The Two Babylons," by Rev. Alexander Hislop.

[6] "The Judgment Seat of Christ," by L. Sale-Harrison.

[7] "Palestine, God's Monument of Prophecy," by L. Sale-Harrison.

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